This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

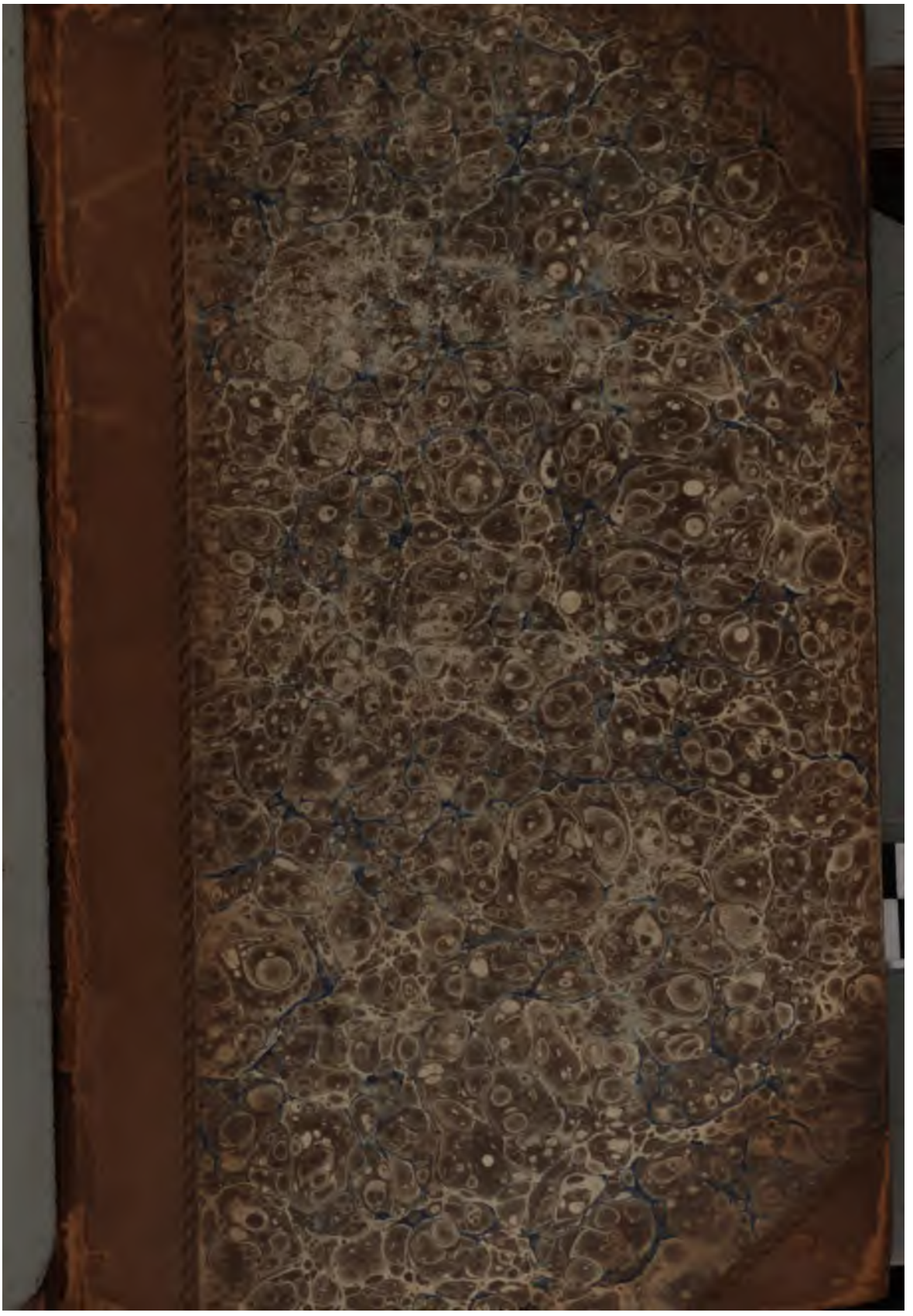
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



600011038J

27 - 680.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

HOUSES

OF

YORK AND LANCASTER.

SHACKELL AND BAYLIS, JOHNSON'S-COURT.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

RIVAL HOUSES

OF

YORK AND LANCAST

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL:

EMBRACING

A PERIOD OF ENGLISH HISTORY

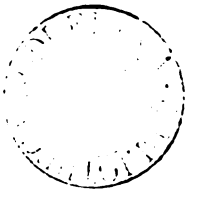
FROM

THE ACCESSION OF RICHARD II. TO THE DEATH OF HENRY VI

BY EMMA ROBERTS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HARDING AND LEPARD, PALL MALL EAST;

AND G. B. WHITTAKER, AVE-MARIA LANE.

1827.

680.

CONTENTS

OF

VOLUME THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

Page

Brilliant Prospects at the Opening of Henry's Reign—Valour of the English Captains—Battle of Vernueil—Slaughter of the Scottish Allies of France—Jeopardy of Charles VII.—his Retreat—Biographical Sketch of Richard Beauchamp—his early Prowess—his foreign Travels—Jousts at Verona—Pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre—Courtesy of the Soldan's Lieutenants—Celebrity of the famous Guy—Warwick is engaged to serve the Prince of Wales by Indenture—his zeal in the Service of Religion—he is made Captain of Calais—attends the Council of Constance—kills a foreign Nobleman at a Tilt—Compliment paid to him by the Empress—his Favour at the Emperor's Court—his courteous Conduct at Calais—he devises a new Point in Chivalry—overthrows three Knights at a Tournament—his magnificent Gifts to his Opponents—is made Tutor to the King—is appointed to the Command in France—the Splendour of his Retinue—his Death—curious Inscription on his Tomb—Extracts from his Will—amusing Injunctions—Memoir of Thomas Montacute—permitted the Title of Earl by Courtesy—Favours bestowed by Henry V.—his Reputation in France—Beauty of his Countess—his Jealousy of the Duke of Burgundy—The Duke of Bedford tilts for the first time—Salisbury's Death before Orleans—the vulgar Horror of Gun-shot Wounds—The Earl of Salisbury's charitable Donations—Directions respecting his Funeral—Extracts from his Will—second Marriage of his Widow—her Tomb at Ewelme—Supposition respecting the Order of the Garter—Robes worn by Ladies—other Particulars relating to their Participation in the Order—At-

Page

tempt to revive the Ancient Privileges—Sketch of Talbot's military Career—his Exploits in France—Capture on the Field of Patay—Honourable Conduct of Charles VII.—Talbot's Gratitude to Saintrailles—Present from the French King—Talbot's Successes in Guienne—his Defeat and Death—Oration of the Herald—Fuller's Encomium—Parallel drawn by Sir Walter Raleigh—Talbot's Wives—Titles conferred upon him by Henry VI..... 1

CHAPTER II.

Biographical Sketch of Sir John Fastolfe—unjustly represented as Shakspeare's coward Knight—Liberties taken with the Name of Sir John Oldcastle—Fastolfe's Claim to gentle blood—his early Services—is patronized by the Duke of Bedford—obtains several important Commands in France—is elected to the Order of the Garter—The Battle of Herrings—Fastolfe's conduct at Patay—Doubts respecting the Truth of Monstrelet's Report—Vindication of Fastolfe—his uninterrupted Favour with the Regent—subsequent Commands entrusted to him—Marks of Esteem accorded to him by the Duke of York—he retires to Caister—Aggressions of his Neighbours—Character of Sir John Fastolfe—his Letter to the Rector of Castlecombe—his Avarice—his Discontent—second Letter to Sir Thomas Howes—Lawless Conduct of the Judges—Fastolfe's Jeopardy with the Government—Letter of John Payn—martial Spirit of the venerable Warrior—Fastolfe's Illness and Death—his Funeral—his vast Possessions—Description of his Plate—his Tapestry Hangings—and other Furniture—Dearth of Books—State of the Knight's Cellars—Debts of the Crown—Tributes of Respect paid to Fastolfe by his Contemporaries—Panegyric from Yelverton—and of the Herald..... 35

CHAPTER III.

Predictions respecting the Birth-place of Henry VI.—Prophecy of Henry V.—Exhibition of the Infant King—Acts passed by the Parliament—Henry makes his second Appearance in Public—receives the Honour of Knighthood—he knights his young Companions—Marriage of the Dukes of Bedford and Burgundy, and the Count de Richemont—mean Subterfuge of the latter—Negociations with Scotland—Embassy from that Country—Liberation of the King of Scotland—He is unjustly reproached by the English Historians—Accomplishments of James—his Attachment to the Lady Joan Beaufort—the Monarch's unhappy Fate—his poetical Talents and other Ac-

Page

quirements—Poem of the Duke of Orleans—Division in the English Cabinet—Henry's Coronation—the Banquet—Proposition respecting a Coronation in France—Panic of the English Soldiers—Henry visits France—his Reception at Paris—Processions and Pageants—the King is crowned—Indignation of the French Prelates—Complaints of the Canons—Dislike of the Proceedings by the French—Magnificence of the Banquet—a Tournament—Honours paid to the King on his Return to England—Jealousy of the Duke of Burgundy Richemont's crooked Policy—War with Bretagne—Spirit of the Duke of Bedford—Co-operation of the Cardinal—the Duke of Bedford's impolitic Marriage—Quarrel between the Dukes of Bedford and Burgundy—Successful Negociations of the French King—Indignation of the English at Burgundy's Defection—Embassy of the Heralds—their Danger—Murders committed in the Metropolis—Answer of the Council—Disrespect offered to Henry—Grief at the Death of the Duke of Bedford—Speech of Charles at the Hero's Tomb—Burgundy's Appeal to the Citizens of Ghent—martial Ardour of the Flemings—their vain Boasts—Conduct on the March to Calais—confident Expectations of the Flemings—Events of the Siege—Embassy from the Duke of Gloucester—Burgundy's Answer—Discontent of the Flemings—Defeat sustained by the Men of Ghent—Mutiny in the Burgundian Camp—the Duke is compelled to retreat—Gloucester's Exploits in Flanders—Death of two Dowager Queens of England—and of Isabella of France—Funeral of the latter..... 58

CHAPTER IV.

Ill Effects of Henry's Education—Errors of his Government—Injudicious Gifts to his Favourites—Anger of the Duke of Buckingham—Character of the Duke of Warwick—Henry's pecuniary Embarrassments—Description of the Jewels pledged to Cardinal Beaufort—Suffolk and the Queen usurp all the Patronage—Henry's Love of the Chace—Neglect of the Tilt by the Warriors of his Time—Henry's Place amid the Royal Authors—his Love of Literature—Gloucester's Patronage of Letters—his Collection of Books—Lydgate's Poetry—Versatility of his Talents—his Gallantry to the Fair Sex—his Travels—multiplicity of his Compositions—Other Poets of the Time—MSS. collected by the Duke of Bedford—Decay of Learning—Queen's College, Cambridge, founded by Margaret—and completed by Elizabeth Wydeville—The Ordeal of Battle—Appeals of Treason—Massacre of the Bishop of Salisbury—and of the Bishop of Gloucester—Riot upon St. Bartholomew's Day—Gallantry of the Lord Mayor

Page
—Brawl in Holborn—Hall's Account of an Affray between an English Merchant and an Italian—Female Deputation to Parliament—Murder perpetrated by Women in Whitechapel—Wrongs sustained by wealthy Heiresses—Laws of Chivalry—Religious Persecution—Crimes of the Priesthood—Errors of the Church—Humble Station of the Reformers—Execution of six Martyrs—Conduct of the Lollards at St. Albans—Imprisonment of Reginald Peacocke—Support afforded to the Church by the House of York—Embassy from the Pope—Portents preceding the Civil Wars..... 91

CHAPTER V.

Edward's Government—his Attention to Commerce—Negociations with foreign Powers—Warlike Feeling of the Nation—New Method of raising Money—Edward's Fascination—Anecdote of a rich Widow—Alliance with Burgundy—Preparations against France—Strength of Edward's Army—the King claims the Crown of France—Politic Conduct of Louis—the Herald's Advice—Errors of Burgundy and the Constable—distrust of the former—Indignation of the English Army—their Discomfiture before St. Quentin—Burgundy's Departure—Edward's Courtesy to a Prisoner—Message of the Nobles—Suspicions of Louis—A counterfeit Herald—Interview with Edward's Nobles—The King enters into a Negociation—Morton one of the Commissioners—his Fidelity—Demands of the English—Preliminaries settled—Incredulity of the French Nobles—Anecdote of Louis—Burgundy's Anxiety—his Disappointment and Anger—Favours granted by Louis to the English Soldiers—their hospitable Reception—their Excesses—Meeting between Louis and Edward—their Conversation—Edward's generous Defence of the Duke of Bretagne—sumptuous Gifts of Louis—Flattery of the Courtiers—Indignation of a Gascon—Anxiety of Louis—Edward's peremptory Refusal to aid the King's Designs on Bretagne—Embarrassment of Louis—Edward's Reception in London—Contempt of his Contemporaries—Murmurs of the People—Rigorous Enforcement of the Law—The Earl of Richmond in Jeopardy—his narrow Escape—Obstinate Attachment of the Lancastrian..... 125

CHAPTER VI.

Struggles in the Cabinet—Edward's Indolence—Discontent of Clarence—he aspires to the Hand of the Princess of Burgundy—Disappointment of his Hopes—Enmity of the Queen—Impolicy of Clarence

Page

—Misconstruction of Burdett's hasty Speech—Persecution of the Duke's Servants—Arrest of Clarence—his Trial before the Peers—The King's Speech in Parliament—Condemnation of Clarence—his friendless Situation—his mysterious Death—Edward's bitter Repentance—Misfortunes of the Heirs of Clarence—Grants to Lord Rivers—Edward devotes himself to Pleasure—he enriches himself by Trade—Base Conduct of the French King—Edward projects Alliances for his Children—Marriage of the infant Duke of York with a Baby-Wife—Stately Hunt at Waltham—Present to the Citizens' Wives—Treachery of Louis XI.—Lord Howard's Mission to Paris—Rupture with Scotland—Intemperate Language of Edward and James—Rebellious Spirit of the Scottish Nobles—Execution of the Earl of Mar—Albany's Visit at the English Court—his Proposals to Edward—Siege of Berwick—Destruction of the Favourites of James—Albany and Gloucester advance to Edinburgh—Reconciliation of Albany and his Brother—Edward's Discontent at the Expences of the War—Breach between France and England—Edward's Illness—his ineffectual Attempt to reconcile the Nobles—he repents of his Extortion—Death of the King—Edward's Disposition and Character—Reports in France respecting the Cause of his Death.... 163

CHAPTER VII.

The King's Love of Dress—Sumptuary Laws—New Fashions—Mode of wearing the Hair—Penalties for making piked Shoes—Costliness of Banquets—Strange Modes of Cookery—Receipts for several Dishes—The Soteltie—Great Feast at the Marriage of Lionel Duke of Clarence—and at subsequent Festivals—Sumptuous Banquet given by Archbishop Nevil—Ceremonies observed in taking the Assay—Dearth of the common Necessaries of the Table amidst its Splendour—Amusements of Edward's Court—Sports and Pastimes of the English People—Tournament—Splendour of the Nobles when appearing in the Lists—Laws of the Tournament—Statute published by the Earl of Worcester—Military Toys—Caxton laments the Decay of Chivalry—Knights-Errant—Introduction of Tilts—Pastimes of the lower Orders—Masquings and Mummings—Sports of London from old Times—Entertainments devised by the Citizens for the Royal Family—Christmas Games—Festivities at Easter—and on May Day—Poem of Lydgate's—Rejoicings on Saints' Days—Procession of the Watch—Wrestling at Clerkenwell on Saint Bartholomew's Day—Stow laments the Progress of Gaming—Statutes against unlawful Games—Love of strange Sights—A Turkish Dwarf 179

Page

CHAPTER VIII.

Splendour of Household Furniture—of Dress and Ornaments—Extracts from various Wills—Weight of the Gold Chains—Offerings at Funerals—Dwellings of the Rich and of the Poor—Harrison's Account of the Manner of Building—Poverty of the lower Classes—Hospitality of the Nobles—Neglect of Agriculture—State of Society—Feud between the Talbots and the Berke eys—Battle at Nibly Green—Brutality of the Conqueror—Brawl between Edward's Servants and the City Watch—Indignity offered to the Lord Mayor—Aggressions of the Nobles—Treatment of Prisoners of War—An unnatural Son—Character of Lord Rivers—Printing established in England—Ignorance of the Age—Introduction of new offensive Weapons—Statutes for the Encouragement of Archery—Archers and Men-at-Arms—The Cross-bow—The Hand Cannon—Improvements in Fire Arms—Anecdote respecting Hungary Water—Different ancient warlike Implements—Inscriptions upon Swords—and upon Spurs—Architecture of the fifteenth Century—Devastation occasioned by the Civil Wars—Price of Roses and Apples in the Time of Henry VII.—Monumental Remains—Blazoning of Arms—Badges of the House of York—and of the House of Lancaster—The Fox's Tail—Anecdotes concerning it—Cognizance of the Feather—Badges preserved on the Signs of Inns—Richard's White Boar—The Bear and the Ragged Staff—Oxford's Star—Origin of Supporters—Introduction of the Blazon of Arms by Richard I.—Coinage of England—Changes under different Monarchs—Improvements made by Henry VII.—Edward's Deference to the Church—Increase of Abuses—Feud between the different Orders of Friars—Fashionable Places of Burial—Edward's Religion—Infliction of Torture—its Condemnation by Sir John Fortescue—Persecution of Sir Thomas Cooke—Infractions of the Law—Number of Law Students—Opinion of Sir Matthew Hale—Privileges obtained by the House of Commons—Canvass of a Candidate for a Borough—Wages of the Members—Short Sessions—Rowlie's Poems—Hardynge's Poems—Origin of the Poet-Laureate—Claim of Lord Rivers to a Place amid the Authors of Edward's Reign—his Preface—Poem of Lord Rivers—Dame Juliana Berners.. 221

CHAPTER IX.

Absence of Prince Edward at Ludlow at the Time of his Father's Death—and of Gloucester in the North of England—Proceedings of the Council—Disappointment of the Queen's Wish—Errors com-

Page

mitted by her Party—Gloucester takes the Oath of Allegiance—Buckingham's Message—Meeting between Gloucester and Rivers—Arrest of the Queen's Relations—Gloucester's Dissimulation—Alarm of the Queen—her melancholy Situation—Joy of Hastings—Visit of the Chancellor to the Sanctuary—Panic of the Citizens of London ——Edward enters the Metropolis—is lodged in the Tower—Temptations offered to Gloucester—Feebleness of the opposing Party—Gloucester's ambitious Hopes—Co-operation of the Nobles—their Expectations from the Protector—The blind Confidence of Hastings —Alarming Rumours spread by Gloucester—Accusations of the Wydevilles—Alarm of Stanley—Hastings is summoned to the Council—his Conversation on the Road—Change in the Protector's Demeanour —Arrest of Hastings—his Execution—Character of Hastings—Interview between Gloucester, Buckingham, and the Citizens of London —Particulars of the late Affair proclaimed—Observations upon it .. 283

CHAPTER X.

Prosecution of Jane Shore—her Penance—and Demeanour—Letter from the Protector—Imprisonment of the Bishops—Morton is removed to Ely—Stanley's Liberation—The Duke of York delivered up into the Protector's Hands—and committed to the Tower—Corruption of the Nobility—Richard openly pretends to the Crown—Execution of Rivers, Vaughan and Grey—Piety of Rivers—Reports concerning the Legitimacy of Edward's Children—Sermon at Paul's Cross—Blunder of the Preacher—Richard's Disappointment—Tame Submission of the People—Buckingham's Address to the Citizens—Deputations from the City—The Crown is offered to Richard—and is graciously accepted—Richard repairs to Westminster—and afterwards to St. Paul's—Enmity of Stillington to Edward's Family—Concurrence of the Nobles in Richard's Schemes—Arrival of Soldiers from the North—Creation of Knights of the Bath—Release of Lord Stanley and the Archbishop of York—Imputations against Stanley —Richard's Son created Prince of Wales—Procession through London—Coronation of the new King—Examination of the Wardrobe Roll—Traits in Richard's Character—The Northern Soldiers return Home—Richard's Expectations—Murmurs of the People—Plans in Favour of Edward's Children—Buckingham's Disaffection—the supposed Cause—Parallel between him and the King-maker—his Unpopularity—Death of the young Princes—Grief of the Nation—Despair of the Queen—Reports of the Time—More's Account of the Murder—Buckingham's brief Hopes—his Determination in Favour

Page
of Henry Tudor—Advice of Morton—Escape of the Prelate—Correspondence between the Countess of Richmond and Edward's Queen—The People prepare to take up Arms—Buckingham is summoned to Court—his Answer—Richard's Negociations with Bretagne—his Proclamation—Buckingham's Revolt—his disastrous March—Dispersion of his Followers—his Concealment—Treachery of his Host—his Cowardice—Supposed Scheme of Revenge—the Duke's Execution—Grief of the Bishop of Salisbury—Calamities reported as occurring to Bannister 321

CHAPTER XI.

Dispersion of Dorset's Followers—Execution of Sir Thomas St. Leger—Richmond appears upon the Coast—his Retreat to Bretagne—Proceedings of the Lancastrians—Henry Tudor's Oath—The Nobles swear Allegiance to Richmond—Negociations with the Duke of Bretagne—Subservience of Richard's Parliament—The Commons attainted—Richard's Severity—Courtesy shewn to the Countess of Richmond—Libellous Rhyme—Pomp of Richard's Court—Degradation of Elizabeth Wydeville—and of her Daughters—they accept Richard's offered Protection—The King's Oath—Elizabeth's Advice to her Son—Misconstruction of Richard's best Actions—his Designs upon Richard's Person—Honourable Conduct of the Duke of Bretagne—Treachery of Landois—Richard's Councils are betrayed—Narrow Escape of Richmond—Obtains Protection from Charles VIII.—Conduct of Foreign Princes towards Richard—Henry Tudor's destitute Condition—his sanguine Hopes—he is joined by the Earl of Oxford—and other Knights—Richard's Preparations—The Nobles renew their Oaths of Allegiance—Death of the Prince of Wales—Anecdotes concerning him—Grief of the King and Queen—Choice of the Heir Presumptive—Imprisonment of Warwick—Elevation of the Earl of Lincoln—The Duke of Albany's Visit to England—Invasion of Scotland—Albany is defeated—his Death—Treaty with Scotland—Richard's Proclamation—Weakness of Henry Tudor's Claims—his Letter to his English Friends—Confirmation of the Death of the young Princes—Favours enjoyed by the Princess Elizabeth at Court—Reports of the old Writers—Richard's Exultation—Illness of the Queen—Letter attributed to the Princess Elizabeth—Death of Queen Anne—Remonstrances of Richard's Friends—Apparent Decline of Richmond's Hopes—Richard's Suspicion of the Stanleys—Motives of their Conduct—The King endeavours to gain Dorset over—is prevented by the Vigilance of the Lancastrians

Page
—Richmond applies to his Welsh Friends—Exhausted State of Richard's Finances—Offensive Means of raising Money 374

CHAPTER XII.

Unfavourable Aspect of Richmond's Affairs—Perfidy of Richard's Confidents—Intelligence conveyed to Richmond—Secrecy of Richmond's Measures—Richard's foreboding Fears—Henry Tudor lands in Wales—he commences his March—encounters many Difficulties—is joined by Ap Thomas—and the Earl of Shrewsbury—Richard prepares for Battle—Arrest of Lord Strange—Imprisonment of the Princess Elizabeth—Numbers flock to the King's Standard—Muster at Nottingham—Small Number of Richard's Friends—Norfolk's Zeal—Warning Rhyme—doubtful Conduct of the Stanleys—Richmond's Danger at Shrewsbury—is joined by two Knights—wanders out of the Road—Interview with the Stanleys—Sir John Savage and others go over to the Lancastrians—Richard marches from Leicester—Disturbed State of the King's Mind—his Prophecy concerning himself—his fearful Dream—his Threats of Vengeance—Peril of Lord Strange—Richard takes the Command of the Army—Disposition of his Forces—his Address to the Soldiers—Disparity of Richmond's Numbers—The Stanleys remain neutral—Description of Richmond's Person—his Speech—Situation of the two Armies—Military Talents of the Earl of Oxford—Advantage gained by the Lancastrians—Richard's undaunted Courage—Defection of the Stanleys—Richard's last Charge—he is overpowered and slain—Desertion of the Nobles—Richmond's Gratitude to his Followers—he is crowned on the Field—Death of Richard's Friends—Single Combat between Hungerford and Brackenbury—and between Norfolk and Oxford—Anecdote of Byron and Clifton—and of Rhys Vychan—Escape of Lovel—Execution of Catesby—Insults offered to Richard's Corse—Henry's triumphant Entry into Leicester 417

CHAPTER XIII.

Description of Richard's Person—Compliments paid to him—Extract from Holinshed—Decay of the White Rose—Cecily Duchess of York—Reports respecting her Interference in public Affairs—her Descent from the Lancastrians—Rise and Fall of the Nevilles—Misfortunes and Crimes of Cecily's Children—Supposition concern-

Page
ing St. Leger—Cecily's Retirement—her Death—Henry VII. enriched by her Dower—Elegance of Armour in Richard's Reign—Richard's Fondness for Dress—his Letter—Custom of wearing the Crown—Badge of the White Boar—Richard II.'s White Hart—Incorporation of Heralds—Officers at Arms attached to Noblemen—Rich Presents to Heralds—Proclamations at Christmas 451

CHAPTER XIV.

Henry's Sojourn at Leicester—Proclamation of Richard's Death—Seizure of Warwick's Person—Disappointment in Henry's Character—Elizabeth repairs to London—Henry's Popularity—Reception in the Metropolis—Departure from ancient Custom—Offering of the Standards—Suppositions concerning them—Pestilence in London—Henry's Coronation—Exaltation of Henry's Friends—Appointment of the Yeomen of the Guard—Henry's Difficulties—Subservience of the Parliament—Disfavour of the Yorkists—Henry's Pretensions to the Throne—Anxiety about the King's Marriage—Union of the rival Roses—Joy of the People—Act of Attainder—Proceedings of Parliament—A general Pardon—Peers created—Henry's Progress to the North—Rumours of an Insurrection—Attempt of Lord Lovel—its Defeat—Henry's Reception at York—his Return to London—Loyalty of the People of Bristol—Gifts to the King—Arrival at Westminster—Discontent of the Yorkists—Birth of Prince Arthur—Baptism of the Young Prince—Strange Schemes of the Yorkists—Rise and Progress of an Impostor—A second Pardon proclaimed—Speech of the Earl of Surrey—Enmity of the Duchess of Burgundy—Defection of Lincoln—Coronation of Lambert Simnel—Henry's Conduct to the Dowager Queen—Landing of the Expedition from Ireland—Discipline of the King's Army—Battle of Stoke—Defeat of the Rebels—Henry's Clemency—Liberation of Dorset—Henry's Entrance into London—Coronation of the Queen 466

CHAPTER XV.

Death of Bourchier—Sketch of his Life—Proposals for Foreign Alliances—State of Society in Scotland—Unnatural Conduct of Prince James—Death of the King—Penitence of his Son—Danger of the Duke of Bretagne—Coldness of Henry—Policy of Charles VIII.—Ardour of the English for War—Death of Northumberland—Expe-

Page
dition from the Isle of Wight—Rout of the Bretons—Death of the Duke of Bretagne—Henry's Involvements with Charles VIII.—Slender Aid afforded to Bretagne—Siege of Dixmude—Valour of the English—their terrible Vengeance—Anecdote of an Archer—Rage of the Lord Des Cordes—Truce between France and Bretagne—Ann solicits the Aid of Maximilian — their Betrothment — Perfidy of d'Albret—Project of Charles VIII.—Rough Method of Wooing—Marriage of the French King—Rage and Despair of Maximilian—Henry's secret Determination—Negociation between France and England—Extract from the Will of the Widow of Edward IV.—Preparations for War—Henry's Rapacity—Renewal of the Benevolence—Acts of Parliament—Expedition from England—Siege of Boulogne—Negociations for Peace—Offers of Charles—their Acceptance—Representation of the King's Friends—Disaffection of Maximilian's Subjects—Seizure of Bruges—Reduction of Sluys—Fall of Arras—Recovery of Saint Omer..... 515

CHAPTER XVI.

New Schemes of Henry's Enemies—Alleged Escape of the Duke of York—Perkin Warbeck's Reception in Ireland—Policy of Charles VIII.—Favour shewn to the Impostor by Margaret of Burgundy—Disaffection in England—Inquiries concerning Perkin's Birth—Conduct of the Duke of Burgundy—Examination of Tyrrel and Dighton—Arrest of Perkin's Friends—Panic of others—Charge against Sir William Stanley—his Confession—Henry's apparent Clemency—Condemnation and Execution of Stanley—his vast Riches—Supposition concerning Stanley's Fall—Government of Poynings in Ireland—Feud between Poynings and Kildare—Favour extended to Kildare and Desmond—Discontent of the Flemings—Warbeck appears off the Coast of Kent—is compelled to retire—The King visits the Earl of Derby—Sanguinary Execution in Kent—Treaty with Burgundy—Exile of Warbeck—is repulsed in Ireland—his Reception at the Scottish Court—Marriage with Lady Katharine Gordon—he crosses the Border—Imposition of new Taxes—Insurrection in Cornwall—March of the Rebels to Blackheath—Defeat of Audley—Execution of Audley and his Confederates—Decline of Warbeck's Favour in Scotland—he joins the Cornish Rebels—Siege of Exeter—Warbeck's Discomfiture before the Walls—is forced to retreat—flies to Sanctuary—Henry's Courtesy—Henry's Visit to Exeter—Surrender of Warbeck—his Treatment at Westminster—he

Page

effects his Escape—is retaken—his Punishment—his Confession—is lodged in the Tower—A new Impostor — Execution of Ralph Wilford—Sentence of the Priest—Attempt of Warbeck in the Tower —Implication of the Earl of Warwick—Warbeck's Trial and Death —Unjust Condemnation of the Earl of Warwick—Death of the last of the Plantagenets—Indignation of the English People—Henry attempts to palliate his Conduct 548

CHAPTER XVII.

Respect paid to Henry by foreign Princes—Henry's Attention to the national Interests — Act passed by the Parliament—Abolition of Badges—Rigid Enforcement of the Law—Change produced by Henry's Policy—Fortunate Events springing from his Alliances with Spain and Scotland—Infractions of the Scots—Proposals for a permanent Peace—Joy of the English People—Splendour of Margaret's Cavalcade—Magnificence of the Earl of Northumberland —Gallantry of James—Slender Portion given with the Queen—Arrival of the Princess Catherine of Arragon—Henry's unceremonious Visit—Bacon's Eulogium of Bishop Fox—The Entrance to London—The Pageant—Order of the Procession—Celebration of Mass—The Princess visits the Queen—Marriage of Arthur and Catharine—Magnificent Tournaments—and Disguisings—the Duke of York's Feat in the Dance—Costliness and Quantity of the King's Plate—Rich Dress of Lord Vaux—Suppositions concerning his Poetry—Death of Prince Arthur—Affliction of the King and Queen —Grief of the Court of Spain—Proposal for the second Marriage of the Princess 578

CHAPTER XVIII.

Immense Expenditure of the Nobles at Arthur's Marriage—Misfortunes of the Earl of Suffolk—his rash Acts—his Flight to Burgundy—and Return—Lincoln's pecuniary Involvements—his second Flight with his Brother—Henry's Uneasiness—Arrest of several Nobles—Execution of Tyrrel and Wyndham — Distress of Suffolk — Anathema pronounced against him—Death of the Queen—and of Sir Reginald Bray—Development of Henry's Character after the Decease of his Friends—The King seeks a matrimonial Alliance with the Queen of Naples—his Fastidiousness—and Disappointment—Death of Isabella

Page
of Spain—Henry's Alarm—Visit of the Duke of Burgundy—Dilemma of the Strangers—Honours paid to him—Henry's Bequests—and ungenerous Conduct—New Marriage Projects—Death of the Duke of Burgundy—Henry applies to the Heirs of Joanna—Faithlessness of Charles V.—Decay of Henry's Health—his Penitence—Original salutary Tendency of his Exactions—Growth of Henry's Avarice—Vain Attempts to repair his Errors—Splendour of his Court—his Attention to Commerce—his extreme Caution—his Clemency—his Attention to the Common People—his Conduct to his Wife and Mother—his Courtesy to his Inferiors—his Piety—Death of the King—Conjectures concerning the Dangers awaiting a longer Existence—Extract from Henry's Will—State of the Fine Arts in England—Poets of Henry's Time—Printing—Splendid Suit of the King's Armour—Marriage of Edward IV.'s Daughters 1502

MEMOIRS

OF THE

RIVAL HOUSES

OF

YORK AND LANCASTER.

CHAPTER I.

Brilliant Prospects at the Opening of Henry's Reign—Valour of the English Captains—Battle of Vernueil—Slaughter of the Scottish Allies of France—Jeopardy of Charles VII.—his Retreat—Biographical Sketch of Richard Beauchamp—his early Prowess—his foreign Travels—Jousts at Verona—Pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre—Courtesy of the Soldan's Lieutenant—Celebrity of the Famous Guy—Warwick is engaged to serve the Prince of Wales by Indenture—his Zeal in the Service of Religion—he is made Captain of Calais—Attends the Council of Constance—kills a foreign Nobleman at a Tilt—Compliment paid to him by the Empress—his Favour at the Emperor's Court—his courteous Conduct at Calais—he devises a new Point in Chivalry—overthrows three Knights at a Tournament—his magnificent Gifts to his Opponents—is made Tutor to the King—is appointed to the Command in France—the Splendour of his Retinue—his Death—curious Inscription on his Tomb—Extracts from his Will—amusing Injunctions—Memoir of Thomas Montacute—permitted the Title of Earl by Courtesy—Favours bestowed by Henry V.—his Reputation in France—Beauty of his Countess—his Jealousy of the Duke of Burgundy—The Duke of Bedford tilts for the first time—Salisbury's Death before Orleans—the vulgar Horror of Gun-shot Wounds—The Earl of Salisbury's charitable Donations—Directions respecting his Funeral—Extracts from his

Will—second Marriage of his Widow—her Tomb at Ewelme—Supposition respecting the Order of the Garter—Robes worn by Ladies—other Particulars relating to their Participation in the Order—Attempt to revive the Ancient Privileges—Sketch of Talbot's military Career—his Exploits in France—Capture on the Field of Patay—Honourable Conduct of Charles VII.—Talbot's Gratitude to Saintrailles—Present from the French King—Talbot's Successes in Guienne—his Defeat and Death—Oration of the Herald—Fuller's Encomium—Parallel drawn by Sir Walter Raleigh—Talbot's Wives—Titles conferred upon him by Henry VI.

CHAP. I.

THE glories of the early part of the reign of Henry VI. afford a striking contrast to its lamentable conclusion. The baby brow of the young king was decked with two crowns. The sword of his gallant uncle, the Duke of Bedford, hewed its splendid path through the fields of France, crimsoned with the blood of those who ventured to oppose themselves to English sway. His throne was surrounded by a band of heroes, yielding not in valour or in fortune to the most renowned paladins who ever shone upon the dazzling page of chivalry. A Warwick, a Salisbury, a Talbot, a Clifford, a Fastolf, fought under his banners: bright luminaries, whose daring exploits were emulated by every noble knight and soldier in his service. Until the fatal siege of Orleans every march of the English troops led them to victory. Before Crevant, in 1423, the second year of Henry's reign, the Earl of Salisbury defeated an army assembled by Charles VII. with great slaughter and the capture of many prisoners of note. Again in the following year another important victory rewarded the English arms. Assisted by his faithful allies the Scots, Charles sent eighteen thousand men into the field, and Bedford with an

inferior force advanced to meet them on the plains of Vernueil. Seated on a bay courser, in the centre of his host, "under a banner curiously beten with his arms,"* the duke animated his soldiers by a spirited address, and shouting their war cry, "St. George! a Bedford! a Bedford!" they rushed upon the foe, who amazed by the startling acclamations and the fury of the onset, quailed for a moment beneath the shock, but recovering from their panic, answered with "Montjoy!" and "St. Denis!" and the field was obstinately contested. The military talents of the English commander and the steady discipline of his troops prevailed. The baggage, the pages, the horses, and the ineffective persons attached to the army, were placed by the order of the Duke of Bedford behind the men at arms, protected by a guard of two thousand archers. The French directed the Lombards in their service to attack the rear; but finding it stoutly defended, these mercenary soldiers seized the plunder within their reach and fled. Intent upon securing their booty they quitted the field without returning to the charge, and the archers immediately joined the main body, and by this opportune reinforcement spread confusion and death throughout the French ranks, unable to maintain the combat against the fresh assailants who poured down upon them with irresistible impetuosity. Eleven thousand of the enemy fell in this engagement, which was designated by the English parliament as the "grettest dede doon by Englishmen in our dayes, save the battaile of Agyncourte."† The Duke of Touraine, the

CHAP. I.

* Hall. † Parliament Rolls.

CHAP. I. Earl of Buchan, and the Viscount Narbonne were left amid the slain. The dead body of the latter was hanged by the victors on a gibbet in revenge for the murder of the Duke of Burgundy, in which he had been concerned.* The Duke of Alençon with two hundred gentlemen were taken prisoners; and Bedford assembling the chiefs of his army kneeled down upon the field of battle, and piously returned thanks to the Almighty disposer of human events for the success which had crowned the English arms. Nearly all the Scottish force perished with their commanders in this bloody encounter. A reason has been assigned for the dreadful havoc committed upon these devoted men by Walsingham,† who tells us, that "scarcely any of them could escape by reason of the inhuman slaughter of the Duke of Clarence." All parties in these uncivilized times were wont to make the most cruel reprisals, and to take signal vengeance at the first favourable opportunity upon those who had been instrumental in any former injury or disgrace. The Scots, after so severe a loss, though still serving under the French banners, could no longer appear in separate battalions, but henceforward fought promiscuously in the ranks of their allies.

Charles VII. reduced to a most humiliating state by the defeat of his army, was compelled to shut himself up, weak and inactive, in a city of little note; and his authority extended to so short a distance beyond the walls, that the English styled him, in scorn, "The king of Bourges." The feud which

* Hall. † Sloane's MSS. 1776.

broke out between the Dukes of Gloucester and Burgundy, respecting the dominions of Jacqueline of Hainault, gave the monarch breathing time; and the achievements of the English from this period, confined to the capture of castles and to skirmishes of trifling importance to either nation, were only productive of glory to the gallant individuals who signalized themselves upon these occasions. The desultory warfare carried on by stratagem, by desperate assaults, by bold sallies and prompt surprizes, has all the air of a romance. No enterprize was too difficult or too dangerous for the invincible spirits of the English captains. Salisbury, Warwick, Talbot, and Fastolf, vied with each other in deeds of knightly heroism; they carried fire and sword into the heart of every fortress which they approached, enriched themselves with the treasures of the fair and fertile country apparently delivered up for a prey and a spoil, and struck consternation into the hearts of the common people by the universal terror inspired by their names. Charles VII. and his partizans fled before their destroying swords to the distant bank of the Loire, and the lions of England, planted by her hardy sons upon battlement, tower and citadel, floated in proud triumph through the conquered realm. CHAP. I.

Although the military talents of the Earl of Salisbury gave him precedence as a leader over every other general, with the exception of the Duke of Bedford, Richard Beauchamp the chivalrous Earl of Warwick lives in the historic page second to none of his gallant associates. To the animated record of

CHAP. I. a writer,* who flourished in the reigns of Edward IV. and Richard III. posterity is indebted for a detailed account of this hero's life, the original MS., embellished with illuminations valuable for their spirit and truth is preserved in the British Museum, and a faithful narrative of the earl's achievements copied from this authority is to be found in Dugdale's Warwickshire. Richard Beauchamp was born in 1381, and his christening was honoured by the presence of a crowned head, Richard II. performing the office of god-father, attended by Richard Scroope, Bishop of Coventry and Litchfield. Upon the banishment and attainder of his father, at the period in which the wrath of the revengeful monarch burst upon the devoted heads of Gloucester's confederates, he was committed to the guardianship of Thomas Holand, Duke of Surrey, the near relative and favourite of the king, who by a royal grant obtained possession of a suit of arras hangings containing the story of the famous Guy Earl of Warwick, an heirloom in the family of the exiled earl, "which hard measure," says Dugdale, occasioned Catherine, a nun of Shouldham and a kinswoman, being the daughter of an elder brother of the house, who died without leaving male issue, to petition the king for a restoration of property inestimable to the descendants of that legendary chief, whose marvellous exploits inspired so many Earls of Warwick with the desire to equal or eclipse his renown. The accession of Henry of Lancaster to the English throne removed the cloud which had darkened the youthful days of Richard Beauchamp. By the death of his father

* Rous.

he became invested with the family titles and estates, and entered upon his brilliant career of arms at a tournament in honour of the coronation of Jane of Navarre, consort of Henry IV. where he kept the jousts upon the queen's part "against all commers, in which action," says his historian, "he behaved himself most nobly." During the campaign against Owen Glendor the earl distinguished himself by many gallant deeds; he had the honour of seizing the banner of the Welch leader and putting him to flight, and at the revolt of the Percies he followed the king to the field of Shrewsbury, and added fresh lustre to his name by a display of intrepid valour worthy of the antagonist of Hotspur and of Douglas. A reception into the brotherhood of the Garter rewarded these services; and already famous throughout the Christian world, Warwick, equally celebrated for his piety as for his courtesy and courage, obtained leave from the king to pay his vows at the holy sepulchre. Upon quitting England the earl visited his cousin the Duke of Barr, where he was nobly entertained for the space of eight days, "being," says Rous, "full lovingly and worshipfully refreshed," and thence accompanied by his kinsman he journeyed to Paris, where he also experienced a very flattering reception. The King of France, who in honour of the holy feast then celebrating, appeared at the banquet on Whitsunday, crowned, invited the English knight to dine at his own table, and the earl at this solemnity, "so famously behaved himself, in language and nurture, that the king and his lords with all other people gave him great laud," and at his departure Charles evinced his high esteem of the

CHAP. I. noble qualities of his guest, by appointing a herald to conduct him in safety through the realm.

New honours awaited the earl in Lombardy, a second herald dispatched to meet him, presented a letter from Sir Pandolph Malacet, challenging him to perform certain feats of arms for the order of the Garter at Verona, before Sir Galeot of Mantua. Warwick gladly embraced the opportunity of upholding his country's glory and the honourable order which his sovereign had conferred upon him; but restrained his martial ardour until after the performance of a pilgrimage to Rome, whence he repaired to Verona, where the rumour of the tilt had drawn together an immense multitude anxious to behold this popular exercise. The knights agreed to fight with axes after the joust, then with arming swords, and lastly with sharp daggers. Sir Pandolph entered the field with nine spears borne before him. In the first encounter neither party sustained defeat, but in the attack with axes, Warwick wounded his antagonist severely in the shoulder, "and the Italian," says Rous, "would have been utterly slain had not Sir Galeot cried: 'Peace.'" The fame of this exploit travelled before the earl to Venice, where the duke and his nobles vied with each other in acts of courtesy towards the accomplished English knight, whom they loaded with valuable presents. In Asia, at that period the seat of arts and arms, the illustrious pilgrim was treated with the deference due to his rank and talents. The patriarch's deputy received him with much respect, and having made his offerings at the Saviour's hallowed shrine, he placed his armorial bearings upon the north wall of the

Temple, which we are informed "continued many years after, by the relation of divers pilgrims who came from thence." The Soldan's Lieutenant, styled by Rous, Sir Baltredam, having heard that the earl was a descendant of the famous Sir Guy of Warwick, whose history the natives of the east possessed in books of their own language, invited the warrior boasting so renowned an ancestor to his palace, where after feasting him royally, he presented his visitor with three precious stones of great value, and divers cloths of gold and silks, as guerdons for his servants. In this hour of social intercourse the historian gravely informs us, that the supposed infidel confessed a belief in the Christian religion, which however from the dread of the danger which he must incur in its discovery, he was obliged to conceal; and to prove the truth of his assertion respecting his secret opinions, "he rehearsed the creed." The Earl of Warwick returned the civilities of the Soldan's Lieutenant by giving a banquet to his servants, and sending them away with rich gifts of scarlet and other English cloths. Sir Baltredam, charmed with the stranger's gracious courtesy, honoured him with another visit, saying that he would wear his livery and be marshal of his hall; whereupon the earl, who was never outdone in politeness, presented him with a gown of black puke furred, after which they had much discourse together, "he, Sir Baltredam, being skilful in sundry languages." From Jerusalem Richard Beauchamp returned to Venice, where his second reception was not inferior to the first. From that city he travelled into Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Prussia, Westphalia, and also some coun- CHAP. I.

CHAP. I.

tries in Germany, "showing great valour in divers tournaments."

Upon the earl's return to England an especial mark of royal favour awaited him. By an indenture bearing date the second of October in the twelfth year of Henry IV., he was retained to serve the Prince of Wales as well in peace as in war, both in the realm of England upon and beyond the seas: for which service he was to receive the sum of two hundred and fifty marks yearly, to be paid out of the exchequer of the prince by even portions at Easter and Michaelmas. And it was likewise stipulated that when he should be in the court of the said prince, he should be allowed the attendance of four esquires and six grooms, "and dyet for them all," provided that the said prince should share a third of his spoils in battle, and the third of the thirds obtained by those who fought under his banners: also, if he should capture any great commander, fort, or castle, they were to be delivered up to the prince upon a reasonable satisfaction for the same. "Nay," observes our author,* "the earl stood so high in the esteem of that heroic prince, Henry V., that against his coronation he was for his wisdom and industry, as the words of the charter import, constituted High Steward of England for that solemnity."

In the second year of the new monarch's reign the Earl of Warwick displayed his zeal in the faith which he professed, and in the service of the king his master, by engaging actively against the Lollards. In the following year he was appointed to the com-

* Dugdale.

mand of Calais, with a guard of twenty-six men-at-arms, and three knights mounted, thirty archers on horseback, and four hundred archers and private soldiers on foot, all of his own retinue, besides ten men-at-arms, and ten archers on horse-back belonging to the Treasurer of Calais, and ten cross-bowmen, twenty carpenters, five masons, with others maintained at the king's charge. These forces were to receive considerable augmentation in time of war.

The earl attended the grand council held at Constance in 1415, accompanied by the Bishops of Salisbury, Coventry and Litchfield, Bath and Wells, Norwich, Hereford, and St. David's, the Abbot of Westminster, the Prior of Worcester, with divers other learned persons, and a train of eight hundred horsemen. Again the fame of the earl's achievements rang throughout the christian world; during the congress he received a challenge from a foreign nobleman, styled by Rous "a great duke," to tilt "for his lady's sake," and in this fierce, and according to modern ideas barbarous encounter, Warwick slew his adversary, an exploit which it would appear was highly gratifying to the empress who witnessed the sanguinary deed; and charmed with the earl's superior skill and bravery took his livery of the bear from the shoulder of one of his knights, with the intention of wearing it "for great favour" on her own person. Warwick being informed of this act of gracious condescension, directed that the badge so honoured should be made of pearls and precious stones, and presenting this splendid gem to his imperial patroness, it was, we are told, received

CHAP. I. "with much respect." Sigismund also distinguished the Earl of Warwick with the most flattering marks of esteem; the emperor gave him his sword to bear, and offered to send by his hands a very precious relic to England, the heart of St. George its tutelary saint. Warwick gratefully undertook the commission, but on hearing that the Emperor intended to visit England in person he restored the gift to him, saying, with his usual grace, that "the delivery thereof by his own hand would be more acceptable." Sigismund shortly afterwards set forward upon his journey, and at his arrival at the English court received the Order of the Garter, an appropriate compliment from Henry, and in the character of a Knight of St. George offered the holy heart at Windsor. As the emperor travelled to and from England he was "royally entertained" at Calais by its chivalric and magnificent commander; his "comportment," we are informed by the historian, "being such" that his illustrious guest told the King of England "that no christian prince had such another knight for wisdom, nurture, and manhood;" adding, that if all courtesy were lost, yet might it be found again in him; insomuch, ever after by the same emperor's authority, he was called the "Father of Courtesie."

Ever anxious to signalize himself in feats of arms, the earl during his sojourn at Calais, meditated the performance of some "*new point* in chivalry;" and, in pursuance of this design, directed that three pavices (shields) should be painted, and in each pavice a lady; "the first harping at the end of a bedstead, with a grate of gold on her left sleeve, and her knight

called the Green Knight, with a black quarter; he should be ready to joust with any knight of France; twelve courses, and two shields should be provided; and that knight's letter was sealed with his arms, the field silver. The second pavice had a lady sitting at a covered board, working pearls; and on her sleeve was attached a glove of plate (silver); and her knight was called "Chevalier Vert," and his letter was sealed with the arms, the field silver, and two bars of gules; and he must joust fifteen courses, and there should be two saddles of choyes. The third pavice, a lady sitting in a garden, making a chaplet, and on her sleeve a poleyn with a rivet. Her knight was called Chevalier Attendant, and he and his fellow must run and course with sharp spears, and without shields. His letter was sealed with gold, and gules quarter, a border of verd." CHAP. I.

These missives were sent to Charles VI. and his court, and the invitation was accepted by three French knights, who assembled on a lawn called the park hedge of Guynes. On the appointed day Warwick entered the field mounted on a courser trapped with the arms of one of his ancestors, a large plume, or as Rous expresses it, a bush of ostrich feathers on his helmet, and his vizor closed. At the third course he cast his antagonist, called Chevalier Rouge, to the ground, at his spear's point behind the horse-tail, and then, still maintaining his incognito, he rode unknown to his pavilion and forthwith sent "a fair courser" to the discomfited knight. The next day the gallant earl appeared again upon the field with his vizor closed, a chaplet on his basnet, surmounted by a tuft of ostrich

CHAP. I. feathers, and his charger trapped with his arms of silver and two bars of gules. He encountered Sir Hugh Lawny, called the Blanc Knight, smote this new champion on the vizor thrice, broke his harness, and returning to his pavilion again victorious and unknown paid the same compliment to his second opponent which he had offered to the first, by sending him "a good courser." Upon the third day Warwick rode to the field with his face uncovered, and his name and rank disclosed: the chaplet on the basnet which he had worn the preceding morning was upon this occasion rich with pearl and precious stones, and he said that "like as he had in his own person performed the two days before, so he would the third." Another triumph crowned the arms of a knight worthy of a seat amid the far famed heroes of King Arthur's board. At every stroke of his spear he bowed Sir Coland Fynes, the chevalier who advanced to meet him, down to his horse's back. The Frenchman being unable to bend the earl from his proud seat, exclaimed that he was bound to the saddle, an accusation which Warwick instantly refuted by alighting from his steed, and remounting with equal ease. The victor rode to his pavilion amidst the acclamations of the people, whence he dispatched "a good courser" to the third knight who had sustained defeat from his powerful arm; and having feasted the spectators and presented rich gifts to the vanquished, he "rode with great worship to Calais."

The earl in crossing the sea upon his return from the seat of his government, captured two large carracks, and shortly afterwards attended the Duke

of Clarence into France, with whom he performed many gallant actions. At the siege of Caen he was the first person who mounted the breach, pressing eagerly forwards, he shouted "a Clarence! a Clarence!" and planting the English banner upon the walls, the town thus valiantly assaulted surrendered to the Duke. Warwick also won Mount St. Michael, and as a reward for these signal services the king created him Earl of Aumerle, and at the siege of Rouen permitted him to erect his tent next to the royal pavilion. CHAP. I.

Henry at his death manifested the estimation in which he held the Earl of Warwick, and his entire confidence in his wisdom, by appointing him in his will the tutor of his only child; the dying monarch doubtless trusted that under so renowned a warrior his infant heir would be early trained to deeds of arms and feats of chivalry, but Warwick though so capable of teaching his pupil every martial and knightly exercise, chose rather to adopt the suggestions of the council and to quench the first sparks of a generous spirit which flamed up in the breast of the youthful king. He applied for an extension of his power and authority, and for permission to use coercive measures in support of his commands:* his request was granted, and Henry though represented at the age of ten years "as grown in years, in stature of his person and in conceit and knowledge of his high authority," and giving his attendants reason to suppose that he would "more and more gruge with chastising and lothe it,"† yet emerged from the tutelage of the most accomplished hero of the age,

* Parliament Rolls † Fenn.

CHAP. I. a cowed and lowly-minded anchoret, more fitted for a hermitage than a throne, meek, amiable, and pious, but destitute of every qualification requisite for the government of those hardy spirits with whom he was surrounded.

At the death of the Duke of Bedford Warwick succeeded that illustrious prince in the command in France. Nothing could surpass the splendour of the appointments which he prepared for this honourable mission. He was attended by a particular officer at arms called Warwick herald, who received a grant from him of an annuity of ten marks sterling. "The state and lustre of the earl's equipage," says Dugdale, "may in some sort be discerned by his painter's bill." This curious document which the diligent antiquary has preserved in his History of Warwickshire, gives a description and the price of the several gorgeous articles which it enumerates; among the items are, "One coat for my lord's body beat with fine gold. Two pavices for my lord, the one with a griffin standing on my lord's colour, red, white, and russet, the other painted with black and a ragged staff beat with silver occupying all the field. Two coats for heralds beat with demmy gold. Four banners for trumpets beat with demmy gold. A great streamer for a ship, forty yards in length and eight in breadth, with a great bear and griffin holding a ragged staff, poudred full of ragged staffs. Three pennons of satten entertailed with ragged staffs, besides standards, spear-shafts, coat-armor, &c. &c. Upon the passage to France the earl was exposed to imminent danger from the fury of a

tempest, apprehending the total loss of the ship he bound himself with his wife and son to the mainmast, in order that in the event of their perishing at sea, and their bodies being found, their name and rank might be discovered by "his cote of arms," and fitting burial afforded to the partners of his misfortune.

The earl survived his command in France only four years, his corpse was brought to England and interred with great magnificence at Warwick, his monument being one of the most splendid of the sepulchral remains which time and the more destructive hand of man has spared to our ancient churches; and it is particularly curious on account of an inscription, which instead of being pointed in the usual manner, has in place of commas or other stops, the bear and the ragged staff, the famous badges of the family, inserted to mark the different pauses in each sentence. Amid the legacies of this potent earl are an image of our lady of pure gold to the collegiate church at Warwick; four images of gold to be made "like unto himself in his coat of arms, holding an anker betwixt his hands," to be offered in his name at the shrines of four churches. To Isabel, his second wife, he gave "all the silver vessels, bedding, and household stuff that he had with her, and over and above all that, and whatsoever else she had since her marriage, two dozen of silver dishes, twelve chargers of silver, twelve saucers of silver, a pair of basins covered, silver and gilt, four other basins of silver of one sort, with his arms enameled on the bottom of them. Likewise the great paytren bought of the Countess of

CHAP. I. Suffolk, sometime belonging to the Earl of Salisbury, and to his son Henry, the cup of gold with the dance of men and women." Warwick manifested his anxiety respecting his welfare in a future state, by desiring that first, and in all possible haste after his decease, there should be said five thousand masses for his soul, and deeply impressed with the illusive conviction of the continual supremacy of the Roman Catholic faith in England, directed also that three masses should be sung every day for his soul's repose, "as long as the world might endure." A confident provision for futurity not uncommon in the wills of this age, in which we read of sums of money appropriated for masses, "to be sung for ever."

Thomas Montacute, the celebrated commander in the French wars, was the eldest son of John Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, beheaded for his attempt to replace Richard II. upon the throne: although by the generosity of Henry IV. he became repossessed of a part of the confiscated estates seized by the crown at the failure of that unfortunate enterprize, it does not appear that he was ever formally restored to the title forfeited upon his father's attainder.* In the parliament held in the second year of the reign of Henry V., he endeavoured to obtain a reversal of the judgment pronounced against the late Earl, but was unsuccessful, and Dugdale in making mention of his will, says, that he "styled himself Earl of Salisbury." The title seems always to have been granted to this gallant soldier by courtesy, but at his death his honours were conferred upon the husband of his

* Dugdale.

only daughter; a Nevill, son of the Earl of Westmoreland; to the exclusion of the next male heir of the family who vainly strove to assert his right to the earldom.* Henry V. early appreciated Salisbury's heroic qualities; in the fourth year of his reign he retained him by indenture in his service, and rewarded his valorous conduct at the siege of Caen by a grant to himself and to the heirs male of his body, of the castle and lordship of Danvillers, and all other castles, lands, and lordships of Sir Thomas Tournebu, knight. Salisbury also received a grant of the earldom of Perch in Normandy, from the same munificent hand, part of the possessions of Sir Lewis de Longny, knight, paying yearly to the king, his heirs and successors, "two ousles at the castle of Roan on the first day of August." After the death of Henry, the splendour of whose fame eclipsed that of all his contemporaries, Salisbury's deeds acquired a brighter and more dazzling lustre; so high was his reputation, that when a strong body of French soldiers attacked a town garrisoned only by six hundred men, the besieged being hardly pressed made a bold sally, shouting St. George! a Salisbury! and the foe supposing that the gallant earl had in reality flown to the rescue of the fortress, instantly abandoned the enterprize, and flinging down their weapons in despair, betook themselves to flight, leaving their camp equipage, ordnance, military stores, and some treasure behind them.

The harmony which had so happily existed between the Burgundians and the English, was threatened with disturbance from the displeasure excited

* Dugdale.

CHAP. I. in the breast of the Earl of Salisbury by the too pointed attentions which the Duke of Burgundy offered to the countess his wife. During a splendid feast held at Paris, and celebrated with banquets, dances, and jousts, at which we are told by Stow, "the Duchess of Bedford was holden for the most gallantest lady of all others, and with her the Countess of Salisbury, a very fayre lady;" the Duke of Burgundy who is described as being particularly handsome, courteous, accomplished in every manly exercise, and surpassing all his countrymen in the tilt and in the dance, became enamoured of the beautiful Englishwoman, and declared his passion in letters and messages which were not unanswered. The Earl of Salisbury being informed of this correspondence, conceived an unextinguishable hatred to the Duke of Burgundy, and lost no opportunity of displaying his just resentment. The date of this feast, 1424, assures us that it was the earl's second wife, to whom his affectionate remembrances in his will sufficiently evince his attachment, who was the object of Burgundy's libertine pursuit. The queen dowager of France was present at the festivities which terminated so unfortunately, and the Duke of Bedford, who never had engaged in the joust before, entered the lists in honour of the occasion, and tilted with other princes and knights.* Upon the authority of Andrews, we learn that Salisbury quitted France in great displeasure after this affront, and could only be induced to return by a command or higher authority, and a considerable increase of pecuniary emolument.

* Monstrelet and Stow.

The earl's brilliant career now drew speedily to its close. Hall attributes the disastrous attack upon Orleans to this intrepid warrior's urgent advice and solicitation; admirably adapted by his genius and valour for the achievement of extraordinary deeds, no fortress however strong was deemed impregnable by his adventurous spirit, and the success which had attended his most daring actions won the entire confidence of the council and the army; his measures were approved by the one, and eager multitudes crowded to his banner, despite of the difficulties and dangers with which its perilous position might be surrounded. While Salisbury lived to spread confusion and death over a country desolated by his prowess, it was a saying among the exasperated and despairing foe, that "the Almighty had turned English, and the devil would not help France." With the rash hardihood with which in the wars of the middle ages those commanders whose lives were the most valuable to their country rushed into danger, the earl having taken the Tourelles, a fortress erected upon the bridge of the city of Orleans, ventured with some of his captains into the ruins in order to survey the preparations made by the besieged for their defence, and in this exposed situation received a death wound from a cannon ball, fired we are told by Stow, by the son of the master gunner of the city, but in the diary of the siege of Orleans, it is ascribed to a superior hand. "The earl," observes the writer, "was struck by a ball reported to have been fired from a tower called the Tower of our Lady, but never positively known from whence discharged, so that it is said to have been the act of the

CHAP. I.

divinity." The mischief wrought by these newly invented engines struck terror into the hearts of soldiers unaccustomed to weapons which were more fearful if not more destructive than those which had preceded them; death by a ball or bullet was deemed peculiarly horrible. Camden informs us that the Earl of Salisbury was "the first English gentleman ever slain thereby;" and adds, "Albeit now he is thought the most unfortunate, and cursed in his mother's wombe, who dyeth by great shot." According to Monstrelet, this lamentable fate had previously befallen a young knight, the son of Sir John Cornwall, and cousin german to king Henry V. who was killed by a cannon ball at the siege of Meaux, to the great sorrow of the monarch and his friends.

From the date of the death of the Earl of Salisbury, the prosperity of the English in France declined without intermission.

In military skill he was without an equal, and the courage of Talbot and other brave soldiers availed not after the loss of this experienced leader. Fabian in speaking of the earl's fall, observes, "This, after divers writers was *inicium malorii*, for, after this myshap the Englyshmen lost rather than won, so that lytell and lytell, they loste all they'r possessions in France, and albeit, some what they got after, yet for one that they wonne, they lost three, as after shall appear."

No will of the fifteenth century however prodigal in charitable bequests, displays more genuine benevolence than that of the Earl of Salisbury; it is also deeply imbued with the opinions of the age respect-

ing the efficacy of prayers offered for the dead, and distinguished by peculiar expressions of tenderness towards the beloved partner of his honours and his wealth. In this interesting record, the earl directs that in whatsoever part of the world he should die, his body should be buried at Bustlesham in England, and that the funeral obsequies should be performed in a simple, unostentatious manner, without any expensive entertainment, "or any large and sumptuous lights for worldly pomp," but that when his corse should be carried through any of the cities or towns of England to its last resting place, four torches only should be lighted at its entrance, and "borne therewith:" he farther directs twenty-four torches to be borne by the same number of poor men, all clothed alike, with four other torches to be placed around his corse on the day of his funeral; also that to every "poor body" coming to these exequies, four-pence a piece should be given by the hands of his executors for the health of his soul; fifty poor people being first chosen out of the whole assembly, to whom his beloved wife should, with her own hands, give twenty-pence each. To the monastery of Bustlesham the earl bequeaths one hundred pounds sterling out of his moveable goods, for the celebration of one mass every day for his soul's repose, to be specially ordained by the prior and the whole convent there, in a peculiar place appointed for the purpose, with this collect, *Deus cui proprium*, and that two canons of that house immediately after the conclusion of the mass of the blessed virgin, should "forever say" before his tomb, the psalm of *de profundis*, the Lord's prayer, the angelical

CHAP. I. salutation, and three other prayers which he names. He likewise directs that his most beloved wife should, as soon as possible after his death, cause five thousand masses to be specially celebrated for his soul, and the souls of all the "faithful deceased," besides three other masses to be sung daily for his soul during the term of her life, in such places as she and his executors should think fit, within the realm of England, and if possible to be solemnized in her presence. The earl also charges his wife and his executors "to cause with all good speed," three thousand masses to be celebrated for the souls of all the companions of the order of St. George, "in recompence of those masses which had been by him forgotten."

He desires that his executors should send three poor people every day, if they could be found, to the Lady Alice his wife, in order that she might serve them with her own hands, with "one mess of meat, one loaf, and one quart of drink;" and that his wife and his executors should within one year of his decease, cause a thousand marks to be distributed amongst poor people, partly in money, and partly in raiment, both linen and woollen. The earl directs that a chantry should be raised to the honour of the blessed Virgin over his monument, which should be divided into three separate compartments, that in the centre half a foot higher than the other two, for his own body; the body of the Lady Alianore, daughter of Thomas Earl of Kent, some time his wife, on the one side, with the body of the Lady Alice, his present wife, then living, on the other, "if she would." This lady, so celebrated for her beauty,

has in modern days been more distinguished on account of her descent from her illustrious grandfather, Chaucer, the founder of English poetry, than for the rank which she acquired by her union with two potent nobles; she was married first to Sir John Phillips, knight, secondly to the Earl of Salisbury, and about two years after that hero's death, obtained licence to enter the holy pale a third time, with William de la Pole, who, falling by the hand of violence she also survived. CHAP. I.

The affectionate wish expressed by the Earl of Salisbury that his second and most beloved wife should at her decease occupy the vacant space beside him in his tomb was not gratified. The lady was buried under a superb monument at Ewelme, and her effigy, one of three instances in which the garter belonging to the illustrious order of knighthood founded by Edward III. appears as a feminine ornament, has given rise to a supposition that so distinguished a mark of royal favour was sometimes conferred upon the gentler sex. It is certain that when the order of the garter was first instituted, the ladies were invited to assist at the splendid ceremonial performed at the installation of the knights, and that subsequently upon the festivals of St. George, the patron of the order, robes and hoods similar to those worn by the knights were assigned by the donation of the sovereign to the queen, the wives of the companions of the order, and other great ladies. Anstis informs us that the first record of these gifts occurs in the seventh year of the reign of Richard II., when the queen, the Princess Joan, mother of the sovereign, the Duchess of Lancaster, the Countesses

CHAP. I. of Cambridge, Buckingham, Pembroke, Oxford and Salisbury, and the ladies Philippa and Catherine, daughters of the Duke of Lancaster, had robes and hoods provided for them made of violet-coloured cloth, the former lined with fur, and the latter with scarlet, and both embroidered over with small garters worked in silk and gold plate, in each of which the motto neatly wrought appeared, the exact counterparts of the robes worn by the knights companions in that year. Grants to the same effect were issued in the eleventh, thirteenth and nineteenth years of Richard II.; in the first mentioned the robes were white, in the second sanguine, and in the third blue. The ladies continued to wear the costume of the order, and to assist at the festivals during the reigns of Henry V., Henry VI., Edward IV. and Henry VII. In the sixteenth year of Edward IV. the queen, her daughter the Princess Elizabeth, and the Duchess of Suffolk the king's sister, were attired at the feast of St. George in murrey-coloured gowns, the livery of the house of York, embroidered with garters: and Skelton, the poet laureate of Henry VII., records the presence of the ladies of the royal family at the feast of the garter in these words:

> "O knightly ordere clothed in robe of gartere,
> The queen's grace and thy mother clothed in the same."

That the ladies did not derive the privilege of wearing the robes of the order in right of their husbands, is evident from the circumstance of the two unmarried daughters of John of Ghent, and at a later period the Princess Elizabeth in the reign of

de la Fraternité de St George, et Dominee de et liberaturâ Garter, which are the same ts as are given to the knights, and that their were delivered them annually by warrants he crown in the like manner as the knights ed them, and that the robes worn by the ladies distinguished by the number of garters em- red upon them according to the rank which held; a duchess being entitled to an equal er with a duke, and so on through the different es.* "I must confess my ignorance," continues thor, "whether these ladies were heretofore ated by the sole pleasure of the crown, or n by any sort of election, whether any cere- s were performed at their admission, or whe- they were under obligations to observe any or statutes peculiar to them."

e monument of the Duchess of Suffolk affords nce that the ladies were privileged to wear the : as well as the robes of the most celebrated of knighthood in christendom; the lady is re- nted with the badge loosely fastened round the

CHAP. I.

left arm like a bracelet. The effigy of the Lady Harcourt, wife of Sir Robert Harcourt, Knight of the Garter, who died in the year 1472, is likewise decorated with a similar ornament; but with this difference, that the latter wears the garter above the elbow, in fashion of an armlet. The ladies in later times neglected their ancient privileges, and the custom dropped until the reign of Charles I., in which some attempt was made to revive the old observances. Ashmole tells us, that "after a long disuse of these robes by the queens of England and knight companions' ladies, there was at the feast of St. George celebrated in 14 Car. I. endeavour used to have them restored, for the then deputy chancellor moved the sovereign in chapter that the ladies of the knight companions might have the privilege to wear a garter of the order about their arms, and on upper robes at festival times, according to ancient usage. Upon which motion the sovereign gave orders that the queen should be acquainted therewith, and her pleasure known, and the affair left to the ladies' particular suit. The queen's answer was delivered the following year, and a chapter ordered to be held, but the civil wars broke out and the matter wholly slept."

The brave Talbot, who though destined to see that fair kingdom lost which his stout arm had helped to win, yet bent his grey hairs gloriously upon the battle-field against a foreign enemy, and was thus spared the misery of witnessing the desolating progress of civil dissension in England, stands amid the heroes of Henry's wars in France next in rank to the Earl of Salisbury. Descended from an an-

cient family he married Maud, eldest of the two daughters and co-heirs of Sir Thomas Nevill, by Joan his wife, sole daughter and heir to William Lord Furnivall, and was first summoned to parliament in the eleventh year of the reign of Henry IV. In the commencement of the succeeding reign he was arrested for some offence not known by the historian who relates the circumstance,* and committed to the Tower of London, but was speedily released and restored to the favour of the sovereign, by whom in the following February he was appointed to the Lieutenancy of Ireland. During Talbot's command in that country he defeated and took prisoner Donat Mac Murghe, designated by Dugdale as "a great rebel," and being summoned to attend the king into Normandy, he brought his captive with him to England for the better security of his person, and lodged him in the Tower of London. The king shortly afterwards delivered the Irish chief into his conqueror's hands, in order that "he might make the best advantage of him," a mode of acquiring riches conformable to the usages of the time.

CHAP. I.

Nov. 16. 1413.

Talbot owed the dazzling reputation which he obtained in the wars in France solely to his own reckless valour and strength of arm: of Salisbury it was said, that "while he lived the Duke of Bedford might enjoy his leisure;" but although at the head of England's chivalry, conspicuous in every battle, and continually performing some gallant achievement, which filled the christian world with wonder and admiration, Talbot did not possess the talents requisite for the command and conduct of an army;

* Dugdale.

CHAP. I.

and the splendid services which raised him in the twentieth year of the reign of Henry VI. to the dignity of Earl of Shrewsbury, were rather flattering to his country's pride than productive of any material advantage to the English crown.

Talbot's name has already appeared on these pages connected with every event of importance occurring in the war with France. No man ever inspired a higher degree of respect in the breasts of the knightly ranks of his opponents, or struck deeper consternation into the hearts of the populace. Hall, who in his quaint manner bears testimony of the extraordinary estimation in which the earl was held, says, "This man was to the French people a very scorge and a daily terror, insomuch that as his person was fearfull and terrible to his adversaries present, so his name and fame was spitefull and dreadful to the common people absent, in so much that women in Fraunce to fear their young children would crye 'the Talbot commeth! the Talbot commeth!'" When at length the tide of fortune turned against the English, Talbot was taken prisoner at the field of Patay and led into the presence of the King of France: he was received with the respect due to his valour. Saintrailles, one of the band of heroes who clung to their king in his severest distress, and by their devoted constancy to the best interests of France, preserved it from chains and slavery, with the generosity inherent in all noble minds, prevailed upon his sovereign to liberate the brave English captain without a ransom; an act of chivalrous courtesy which Talbot had the good fortune to be enabled to return.

During the vicissitudes of war, occurring in the long interval which elapsed before the final expulsion of the English, Saintrailles fell into the hands of a victor who retained a grateful remembrance of the French knight's honourable conduct. Monstrelet tells us that Charles VII. notwithstanding that Talbot had fought against France for the space of four and twenty years, evinced the high esteem which he felt for this intrepid warrior's character by presenting him with rich gifts in gold, silver, and horses, when he heard that the earl intended to visit Rome in the Jubilee year, namely 1450. CHAP. I.

A brilliant ray illumined the close of Talbot's eventful life. Invited to renew the war upon the continent by the people of Guienne, he achieved a series of rapid conquests worthy of the brightest period of England's heroism. Henry's standard, borne by the veteran soldier, was re-erected in the province so long one of the most precious jewels in the English crown; but its triumph was of short duration. The force under Talbot, though united to that of his valiant son, the Lord Lisle, was inadequate to contend with the powerful army which Charles VII. sent into the field.

The French had become extremely expert in the management of their artillery. Talbot, who found himself opposed to three hundred pieces of ordnance which discharged their ponderous ammunition with fearful havoc amongst his soldiers, could not as heretofore engage hand to hand with the stoutest of his adversaries, and carve with his own sword a passage for his followers: his horse was killed under him, his leg shattered by a bullet, and lying dis-

CHAP. I. abled on the field, he was dispatched by the bayonets of the enemy, after his gallant son had sacrificed his own life in the vain attempt to bear the wounded body of his venerable parent from the fatal spot. The cold remains of the veteran hero, sought after by a herald who had followed his glorious fortunes for nearly half a century, were discovered amidst ghastly piles of the dead. Weeping and embracing the corse, this faithful servant exclaimed, "Alas, my lord, and is it you! I pray God pardon all your misdoings! I have been your officer of arms forty years and more; it is time that I should surrender to you the ensigns of my office." Then, the tears still flowing from his eyes, he spread his coat of arms over the lifeless body, thus performing one of the ancient rites of sepulture.*

Fuller, in whose worthies the Earl of Shrewsbury has obtained a distinguished place, bursts forth into a glowing panegyric at the mention of his name. "This is that terrible Talbot, so famous for his sword, or rather whose sword was so famous for the arm that used it; a sword with bad Latin upon it, '*Sum Talboti pro vincere inimicos meos,*' but good steel within it, insomuch that the bare fame of his approach frighted the French from the siege of Bourdeaux." The same author quotes an interesting parallel drawn by the pen of Sir Walter Raleigh between Sir John Talbot, Lord Lisle, and Paulus Æmilius the Roman general, which it would be unjust to omit while commemorating the filial affection and unyielding valour of this gallant knight. "Æmilius was overpowered by the forces of Han-

* Andrews from Registre De Wyrksop apud Anstis.

-The father advised the son by escape to
: himself for future fortune.—Æmilius re-
he proffer, adding withall, that he would not
come under the judgment of the people of
—His son craved to be excused, and would not
' terms be persuaded to forsake his father.—
considerables Talbot far surpassed Æmilius,
milius was old, grievously, if not mortally
ed: our lord, in the flower of his youth,
, easily able to escape; Æmilius accountable
overthrow received: the other no ways an-
le for that day's misfortune."

Earl of Shrewsbury married a second time in
enteenth year of the reign of Henry VI. the
of the three daughters of Richard Beauchamp
f Warwick, by his first wife Elizabeth, the
of Thomas Lord Berkely, an amazon well
) contend for her alleged right to the titles and
of the Berkelys, and whose exploits will be
ned in their proper place. The earl became
ed of the lands and other property attached
ancient family of the Talbots by the death of

CHAP. I. March and Ulster, under whose banner he served, of an annual rent of an hundred pounds, as the reward of his extraordinary merit. The earl devoted a part of his wealth to the necessities of his sovereign Henry VI. who was indebted to this loyal servant in the sum of ten thousand four hundred and twenty-six pounds four shillings farthing, and who "in consideration of his great services, as well to King Henry V. his father as to himself, both in France and Normandy, granted that after the sum of twenty-one thousand pounds, wherein he stood indebted unto Henry, the Cardinal Bishop of Winchester, were paid, he should receive yearly four hundred marks out of the customs and duties issuing from the port of Kingston upon Hull."* Talbot's declining years were full of honour. He served the king a second time as his lieutenant in Ireland, and performed the duties of that high office with so much zeal and ability, that the grateful monarch added the Earldom of Waterford to the titles and dignities which he already possessed.

* Dugdale.

CHAPTER II.

Biographical Sketch of Sir John Fastolfe—unjustly represented as Shakspeare's coward Knight—Liberties taken with the Name of Sir John Oldcastle—Fastolfe's Claim to gentle blood—his early Services—is patronized by the Duke of Bedford—obtains several important Commands in France—is elected to the Order of the Garter—The Battle of Herrings—Fastolfe's conduct at Patay—Doubts respecting the Truth of Monstrelet's Report—Vindication of Fastolfe—his uninterrupted Favour with the Regent—subsequent Commands entrusted to him—Marks of Esteem accorded to him by the Duke of York—he retires to Caister—Aggressions of his Neighbours—Character of Sir John Fastolfe—his Letter to the Rector of Castlecombe—his Avarice—his Discontent—second Letter to Sir Thomas Howes—Lawless Conduct of the Judges—Fastolfe's Jeopardy with the Government—Letter of John Payn—martial Spirit of the venerable Warrior—Fastolfe's Illness and Death—his Funeral—his vast Possessions—Description of his Plate—his Tapestry Hangings—and other Furniture—Dearth of Books—State of the Knight's Cellars—Debts of the Crown—Tributes of Respect paid to Fastolfe by his Contemporaries—Panegyric from Yelverton—and of the Herald.

CHAP. II.

Sir John Fastolfe was one of the very few of those warriors trained under Henry V. who, living in peace throughout a considerable period of the eventful struggle of the adverse roses, attained a good old age, and died by the course of nature in the quietude of country retirement. The brightness of this hero's reputation has been tarnished by the unwarrantable freedom taken with his name, by a poet

CHAP. II. whose immortal pen stamps indelible disgrace upon every personage condemned to enact the coward, the tyrant, or the knave, in those exquisite dramas, whence many readers who turn away from the less delightful page of history, derive their ideas respecting the illustrious dead. The early poetic records which commemorate the wild sallies and dissolute courses of Henry of Monmouth, and which Shakspeare consulted when writing those inimitable comedies, wherein the freaks of the gay and thoughtless prince are so wittily represented, were the productions of Roman Catholic authors, who, anxious to load the memory of Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, the martyred disciple of Wickliffe, with infamy, gave a conspicuous place amid Henry's unprincipled companions, to the man who sacrificed his life in his zeal for his religion. The reverence with which protestant writers regarded this bold supporter of their faith prevented the farther profanation of his name, and Shakspeare, desirous to preserve the character so rudely and grossly drawn by his predecessors, is supposed to have inconsiderately adopted an appellation familiar in the reign of Henry IV. for the hoary libertine of Eastcheap.

The gallant knight thus fatally maligned boasted a descent from a family who flourished with honourable distinction in England before the Norman conquest. It appears from the authority of old writers, that the young Fastolfe being left a minor, became the ward of Thomas Mowbray Duke of Norfolk, and after the banishment of that unfortunate nobleman by Richard II. and the accession of Henry IV. to the throne, entered the service of Prince Thomas

of Lancaster Duke of Clarence, whom he accompanied to Ireland when serving the office of the king's lieutenant in that country. During his sojourn in the sister kingdom, Fastolfe enriched himself by a marriage with a lady of rank, the daughter of Lord Tibetot and widow of Sir Stephen Scroope, and upon the invasion of France by Henry V. commenced his career of arms as an esquire. Fastolfe obtained honourable celebrity at the battle of Azincourt, and assisted in the gallant defence of Harfleur, from the attack of the constable of France, which by the exertions of its brave garrison held out until the Duke of Bedford came to its relief. He was at the capture of all the castles, towns and places of note in Normandy, and won his golden spurs by the active part which he took in the conquest of that rich province. At or a short time previous to the death of Henry V., Sir John Fastolfe was appointed grand master of the Duke of Bedford's household and seneschal of Normandy, and having valiantly retaken the town of Meulent from the French was created a banneret, and constituted lieutenant for the king and regent in Normandy, in the jurisdictions of Rouen, Evreux, Alençon, and the countries beyond the river Seine, and in addition to this extensive command, he was made governor of Anjou and Maine. At the battle of Verneuil, Fastolfe took prisoner with his own hands, John II. Duke of Alençon, the son of the late duke, slain upon the field of Azincourt. CHAP. II.

Distinguishing himself in several successive actions with the enemy, from whom he wrested the strong fortress of St. Ouen Destrais, the castle of Gravelle,

CHAP. II. and other important places, these indefatigable exertions were rewarded by his election "with,"* says the author of his memoirs, "extraordinary deference to his merits," to the knight companionship of the order of the garter, being adjudged by the Duke of Bedford to be even more worthy of that high honour than Sir John Radcliffe, who obtained an equal number of votes, and who, in the service of his sovereign, "had exercised arms for the space of twenty-eight years unreproached." Ample testimony is borne of the conduct as well as of the valour of Sir John Fastolfe, in a letter addressed to him in the king's name, notifying his election to the Order of the Garter, and in the royal commission for the installation of the newly-created knight. In the first, his good, honourable, and loyal services are mentioned with just praise, and in the second, he is commended for his "great sense, courage, and experience in arms."

Stedfastly pursuing the path of glory, Fastolfe during the siege of Orleans, performed one of the most brilliant actions which have been commemorated in the splendid annals of the war. He was appointed the commander of seventeen hundred soldiers, of whom scarcely more than one third were Englishmen, the guard of a convoy of provisions destined for the besieging army, then considerably pressed for an immediate supply. Anxious to distress the enemy by cutting off the expected reinforcement, some of the bravest and most distinguished of the French captains sallied out of the city at the head of between three and four thousand

* Biographia Britannica, vol. v.

men. Upon the approach of this formidable body, Fastolfe instantly adopted prompt and judicious measures to repel the attack; he formed the carts and carriages which conveyed the stores into a hollow square, and posting his followers behind this entrenchment, placed the archers, supported by the men at arms, at two openings, which alone afforded entrance to the troops. The French and Scottish commanders not agreeing respecting the mode of commencing the assault, the former charged on horseback, while the latter dismounted and fought on foot, but both were vigorously repulsed by the unyielding efforts of Fastolfe and his brave companions, who, baffling the enemy at every point with very severe loss, obtained a decided victory, and leaving the field strewed with the bodies of the slain, marched triumphantly to the English camp with the provisions which they had so gallantly defended. These supplies, on account of the strict fast observed during Lent, consisted principally of fish, and occasioned the late desperate struggle for their possession to be called "the battle of herrings." On the plains of Patay, a few months after the achievement of this gallant exploit, Fastolfe experienced a sad reverse of fortune; the good order of his retreat at the period in which Talbot and Hungerford were taken prisoners, has been deemed by many writers a movement not less worthy of praise than any former display of military skill, and it is supposed that it was only in consequence of some unfortunate dispute which had previously occurred between him and the Earl of Shrewsbury, that his conduct upon the present occasion was ever called in question. But however

CHAP. II. unmerited, the calumnious aspersions cast upon his character by Monstrelet, who affirms that the Duke of Bedford deprived him of the order of the garter on account of his disgraceful flight, has blackened his name with the brand of cowardice, and Shakspeare who was probably acquainted with the charge, but ignorant of the vindication, selected the slandered warrior for the craven voluptuary who makes so conspicuous a figure in dramas which will live for ever.

The historians of Sir John Fastolfe have written very long and able arguments to prove the improbability of his ever having incurred the displeasure of the Duke of Bedford, who did not possess the power either to take away the garter which the sovereign had presented, or to restore it again, as Monstrelet and other authors declare that he did "upon apparent cause of good excuse." The degradation of a knight never took place without previous trial, and was always accompanied by circumstances of great solemnity; the ceremonies observed being particularly imposing, and calculated to impress the minds of all who aspired to the high distinction conferred by the garter, with the salutary dread of incurring similar dishonour.

It would be needless to follow these zealous friends through their somewhat prolix defence, the well-attested fact of the subsequent favour which Fastolfe uninterruptedly enjoyed from the regent, being sufficient to exonerate him from the imputation of ever having forfeited the gallant Bedford's good opinion. In 1430, the year after the battle of Patay, Fastolfe was appointed lieutenant of Caen,

in Normandy; in the following year he accompanied the regent into France, and was soon afterwards dispatched to the council of Basle, in the honourable office of ambassador. He obtained with Lord Willoughby, the joint command of a force which the English government sent to the assistance of the Duke of Bretagne against the Duke of Alençon, and having been employed by his steady patron the Duke of Bedford, until the latest hour of that hero's existence, received the dying testimony of the undeviating attachment of his illustrious friend, by being appointed one of the executors of his will. The high estimation in which Fastolfe was held by Richard Duke of York, when succeeding to the command in Normandy, was evinced by a grant from his personal estate of twenty pounds yearly, bestowed upon the knight as a mark of regard and the reward of his merits; and at length in 1440, after having borne arms in the service of his country during the period of forty years, he retired to the estate bequeathed to him by his ancestors covered with his well earned laurels, and laden with the treasure which he had accumulated in the war. Upon his final settlement at Caister, in Norfolk, Sir John Fastolfe employed a portion of his wealth in the erection of a castle, which he furnished very magnificently, his natural love of splendour being in all probability improved by the taste acquired during his long residence in France. He possessed also a house in Southwark, but fixed his abode chiefly at Caister, where to the stirring tumult of a soldier's life succeeded the cares, anxieties, and petty warfare attendant upon the management of

CHAP. II. property, continually endangered by the incursions of marauding, and the arts of insidious neighbours. A country gentleman in these troublesome and lawless times could scarcely hope for domestic repose; and Sir John Fastolfe seems to have been exposed to every variety of annoyance (with the exception of the regular siege of his castle, which did not take place until after his death,) which the licentious state of society and the weakness of the government combined to produce. The brief notices of passing events which occur in the Paston letters, depict the habits, manners and disposition of the knight and his associates very forcibly, and from these authentic sources we may form a lively and accurate idea of the conduct and mode of living of the gentry of England.

Sir John Fastolfe was celebrated for his hospitality and his munificence; he was a generous friend, a liberal master, a bounteous patron of the clergy, and a benefactor of the poor. Yet while sharing in all the virtues of the age he escaped not untinctured by its vices. A letter preserved in the Paston collection addressed by him to Sir Thomas Howes, rector of Castlecombe, besides directions for the good rule of Caister, contains one of those profane oaths for which the English of every rank were at that period so disgracefully notorious; a reproach still applied with too much justice at the present moment to classes above the vulgar. The epistle runs thus—"Trusty and well beloved friend I greet you well, and I pray you send me word who dare be so hardy to knock against you in my right, and say to them on my behalf that they shall be quiet as far

as law and reason will, and if they will not dread nor obey that, then they shall be quiet by Blackbeard and Whitebeard, that is to say by God and the Devil, and therefore I charge you send me word whether such as have been mine adversaries before this time continue still in their wilfulness." CHAP. II.

Another trait in Fastolfe's character is developed in a letter which displays his eager anxiety to procure the wardship of a young heir, the management of the minor's estate, and the profit which would accrue from the negociation of his marriage; being the sordid motives of a man who was childless, having lost his only son by death, and whose ample fortune, apparent by the ready money and rich effects found in his houses, and the writ of inquiry into the lands and estates which he possessed at his decease, ought to have rendered him careless of an acquisition which could scarcely have been made of importance by honest means.

The unjust advantages openly gained by the rapacious men, who by dint of strong interest were appointed the guardians of rich wards is evident from the circumstance frequently mentioned in Dugdale's Baronage, as an act of especial favour emanating from the sovereign, the grant of the livery of his lands to a young heir, without obliging him to make proof of his age.

It was not to be expected that a man thus keenly attentive to his own interests should patiently submit to the loss of any part of the riches won by his glorious toils, and no blame can be attached to the desire which he manifested in a third letter, also extant, to obtain his share of the ransom of the

CHAP. II. Duke of Alençon; but when contemplating those vast possessions accumulated in the wars of France, the order of the garter bestowed as a testimony of the sovereign's regard to his merit, and the rank of banneret likewise conferred by royal favour, the reader cannot fail to be surprised at the plea which Fastolfe urges in behalf of a suit to the Lords of Canterbury and Winchester, whom he directs his cousin, John Paston, "to move," that he may have license to found a college to the health of his soul, without any great fine, "in recompence of his long services, done unto the king and to his noble father, *never yet guerdoned or rewarded.*"

Some of the domestic troubles with which the knight was vexed in his retirement are enumerated in a second letter to Sir Thomas Howes. "Right trusty and well beloved servant I greet you well, and forasmuch as I understand that on Wednesday next the oyer and terminer shall be holden at Beccles, and ye advice to send you a certificate for cause of the forged quittance by Sir John Sypton, which writing I send by the bearer hereof, praying that you solicit to my council that the said Sir John Sypton be indicted thereupon, and that ye forget not Ulverston Andrews and the others that forged a false office to cast my manor of Bradwell into the king's hand. Item, Sir John Bush, parson of Stratford, fished my stanks at Dedham, and helped to break my dam, destroyed my new mill and was against me always at Dedham, to the damage of twenty pounds, which may be indicted also. Item, he and John Cole hath by force this year, and other years, taken out of my waters at Dedham, to the number of twenty-

four swans and cygnets, I pray you this be not for- CHAP. II.
gotten." The answer to the knight's communication exhibits a frightful picture of the unblushing contempt of justice publicly shewn by the magistracy in the courts of law, under Henry's imbecile government. Sir Thomas tells his patron that the plaintiffs, who in the causes pending were his friends, dared not appear, in consequence of the glaring bias of the judges in favour of the opposite party. These unprincipled men laughed to scorn the declarations which were presented by the complainant's council, "the judges by their wilfulness might not find in their hearts to give not as much as a beck nor a twinkling of their eyes toward, but took it all in derision. God reward," exclaims the indignant writer, "such partiality." "The defendants," he continues, "came down attended by four hundred horse and more, and considering how their well willers were assembled at their instance, it would have been right jeopardous and fearful for any of the plaintiffs to have been present. Privot would suffer no man that was learned to speak for them (the plaintiffs), but took it as a venom, and took them by the nose at every third word." One of the judges, Yelverton, is described as having reproved his colleague, and spoken in condemnation of the shameful proceedings of the court, and Fastolfe's correspondent earnestly advises him in the matter of Sir John Sypton, "to labour in all wise to have Yelverton* judge both," he adds, "in that cause and in all others,"

* Yelverton it appears did not always gain the approbation of Fastolfe's friends, for William of Wyrcestre in a subsequent letter styles him "that cursed Norfolk justice."

CHAP. II. and he farther warns him, "that ye be ware that Privot have not to do in any wise, for then all will be nought."

In addition to these private feuds and aggressions, Fastolfe was in some danger of being involved with the government upon a charge of treason. The editor of the Paston Letters, suggests that the knight's peril was occasioned by his retreat into the Tower of London, when the Kentish rebels headed by Cade surrounded his house in Southwark, which he made no effort to defend; but as even the king himself was obliged to retire from the field and seek the security of a castle in consequence of the refusal of his army to act against the insurgents, there is a strong probability that Fastolfe's riches constituted his sole offence, and that Queen Margaret and her ministers who never objected to any means which promised to recruit an exhausted treasury, were desirous to procure an accusation of a serious nature in order that they might seize upon the wealthy knight's estates. The attempt which was made to brand the veteran warrior with the name of traitor, and the circumstances which menaced him with an evil of such magnitude, are detailed at length in a letter addressed to Sir John Paston, by one of Fastolfe's servants, in which he humbly petitions the former, as the executor of his late master's will, to make him some compensation for his sufferings both under the rebels and the government.* "Right trusty and right entirely beloved master, I recommend me unto you with all manner of due reverence in the most lowly wise as me ought to do, evermore

* Fenn's Collection.

desiring to hear of your worshipful state, prosperity CHAP. II.
and welfare, the which I beseech God of his abundant grace increase and maintain to his most pleasure and your heart's desire. Pleaseth it good and gracious mastership tenderly to consider the great losses and hurts that your poor petitioner hath, and hath had ever since the commons of Kent came to Blackheath, and is at fifteen years passed; whereas my master Sir John Fastolfe knight, that is your testator, commanded your beseecher to take a man and two of the best horses that were in his stable with him to ride to the commons of Kent, to get the articles that they come for; and so I did; and also as soon as I came to the Blackheath the captain made the commons to take me; and for the savation of my master's horses I made my fellow to ride away with the two horses; and I was brought forthwith before the captain of the commons, and the captain demanded of me what was my cause of coming thither, and why that I made my fellow to steal away with the horses; and I said that I came thither to cheer with my wife's brethren and others that were mine allies, and gossips of mine that were present there; and then there was one there who said to the captain, that I was one of Sir John Fastolfe's men, and the two horses were Sir John Fastolfe's; and then the captain let cry treason upon me throughout the field, and brought me at four parts of the field with a herald of the Duke of Exeter before me, in the duke's coat of arms, making four oyez at four parts of the field, proclaiming me openly by the said herald, that I came thither to espy their puissance and habiliments of war, from the greatest traitor that was in England or

CHAP. II. France, as the said captain made proclamation at that time, from one Sir John Fastolfe knight, the which ministred all the garrisons of Normandy and Mauns and Mayn, the which was the cause of the losing of all the king's titles and right of an inheritance that he had beyond sea. And moreover he said that the said Sir John Fastolfe had furnished his place with the old soldiers of Normandy and habiliments of war to destroy the commons of Kent when that they came to Southwark, and therefore he said plainly that I should lose my head; and so forthwith I was taken to the captain's tent, and one axe and one block was brought forth to have smitten off my head, and then my master Poynigs your brother, with other of my friends, came and letted (prevented) the captain, and said plainly, that they should die an hundred or two, that in case be I died, and so by that mean my life was saved at that time. And then I was sworn to the captain and to the commons that I should go to Southwark, and array me in the best wise that I could, and come again to them to help them; and so I got the articles and brought them to my master, and that cost me more among the commons that day than twenty-seven shillings, whereupon I came to my master Fastolfe and brought him the articles and counselled him to put away all habiliments of war and the old soldiers, and so he did, and went himself to the Tower and all his many family with him, but Betts and Matthew Brayn; and had not I been, the commons would have brenned (burnt) his place and all his tenuries, where though it cost me of my own proper goods at

this time more than six marks (four pounds) in meat and drink, and yet notwithstanding the captain at that same time let take me at the White Hart in Southwark, and then commanded Lovelace to despoil me out of mine array, and so he did, and then he took a fine gown of muster Devillers furred with fine beavers, and one pair of brigandines covered with blue velvet and gilt nails with leg harness, the value of the gown and the brigandines eight pounds. Item. The captain sent certain of his meny to my chamber in your rents, and there they broke up my chest and took away one obligation of mine that was due to me, of thirty-six pounds, by a priest of Paul's, and one other obligation of one knight, of ten pounds, and my purse with five rings of gold and seventeen shillings and sixpence of gold and silver; and one harness complete of the touch of Milan; and one gown of fine Paris blue furred with martins; and two gowns, one furred with bogey and one other lined with frieze; and then they would have smitten off my head, when that they had despoiled me at the White Hart; and then my master Poyning and my friends saved me, and so I was put up until at night that the battle was at London Bridge, and then at night the captain put me into the battle at the bridge, and then I was wounded and hurt near hand to death; and then I was six hours in the battle and might never come out thereof; and four times before that time I was carried about throughout Kent and Sussex, and there they would have smitten of my head; and in Kent there as where my wife dwelled they took away all our goods movable that we had, and then would have hanged my wife, and

CHAP. II.

five of my children, and left her no more goods than her kyrtle and her smock; and anon after that hurling (commotion) the Bishop of Rochester impeached me to the queen, and so I was arrested by the queen's commandement into the Marshalsea, and then was in right great distress and fear of mine life, and was threatened to have been hanged, drawn, and quartered; and so they would have made me have impeached my master Fastolfe of treason; and because that I would not, they had me up to Westminster, and then would have sent me to the gaol-house at Windsor, but my wife's, and one cousin of my own, that were yeomen of the crown, they went to the king and got grace and one charter of pardon."

The integrity of this faithful servant preserved Sir John Fastolfe from the storm which threatened his declining years, and no farther attempt was made by the cabinet of the queen to disturb him in his retirement. We hear of only one more cloud upon the sunshine which gilded the calm evening of the warrior's days: an attack upon the honour of the knight, which at the first breath rekindled all his youthful ardour, and with the spirit which in manhood's early prime nerved his arm upon the field of Azincourt, he roused himself to chastise the insolence of those who dared to couple his name with offensive language. A letter, dictated by him to his secretary, and signed by his own hand when nearly approaching his eightieth year, shews that the fiery blood that warms a soldier's veins is not to be chilled by the frosty touch of age. The knight expresses his indignation to his cousin Sir John Paston at some insulting words, reported to have

been spoken at a public table, in the following terms :—

"Right trusty and well-beloved cousin, I commend me to you, and please you to weet that I am advertized that at a dinner at Norwich, whereas ye and other gentlemen were present, that there were certain persons, gentlemen, which uttered scornful language of me, as in this wise with more, saying, 'War the Gosune war, and go we to dinner; go we where? To Sir John Fastolfe's, and there we shall well pay therefore.' What their meaning was I know well to be no good intent to me ward. Wherefore, cousin, I pray you, as my trust is in you, that ye give me knowledge by writing what gentlemen they be that had this report with more, and what more gentlemen were present, as ye would I should, and it were my duty to do for you in semblable wise. And I shall keep your information in this matter secret, and with God's grace so purvey for them that they shall not all be well pleased; at such a time a man may know his friends and his foes asunder."*

This flash of heroism from the expiring lamp of the veteran's life, was speedily followed by a lingering illness which, after suffering for the space of one hundred and forty days from hectic fever and asthma, brought him to the grave. Sir John Fastolfe resigned his existence, covered with years and honours, at the period in which the crown of England passed away from the house of Lancaster.† His funeral obsequies were celebrated with much pomp

* Paston Letters.

† In the thirty-sixth of the reign of Henry VI.—*Biographia Britannica*, vol. v.

CHAP. II. and solemnity at Norfolk, and his body was laid under an arch in a chapel dedicated to the virgin, of his own building, on the south side of the choir at the abbey church of St. Bennett of the Holm in that city.

The property left at the knight's decease was the subject of fierce dispute and wearisome litigation. The Duke of Norfolk claimed Caister castle from the Pastons as his inheritance; and the strong fortress erected by a man so experienced in the art of war, sustained, by the solidity of its walls and the valour of its defenders, a hot siege of several weeks' continuance. Fastolfe's extensive possessions were too inviting to be spared by the spoiling hand of rapacious nobles. A paper in the Biographia Britannica enumerates sixteen manors and forty-nine different places in which he owned landed estates, besides messuages, lands, rents, water-mills, and advowsons; and a document lately brought to light, and presented by Thomas Amyot, Esq. to the society of Antiquaries,† contains an inventory of all the plate, jewels, furniture, and other effects belonging to this wealthy soldier. The catalogue of treasure of various descriptions accumulated by Sir John Fastolfe, occupies nearly thirty quarto pages of the Archæologia, from whence the following extracts are made. The gold coins amounted to two thousand six hundred and forty-three pounds ten shillings, which, we are told by Mr. Amyot, according to the rate of money in those days, must be esteemed a considerable sum. Thirteen thousand four hundred ounces of silver plate are mentioned as the equipment

† Printed in the twenty-first vol. of the Archæologia.

Caister castle. Three hundred ounces more were committed to the care of the monks of St. Bennett's abbey, and two thousand five hundred formed a part of the furniture attached to the house at Bermondsey. The workmanship of these massive ornaments appears to have been very beautiful: a silver salt cellar, weighing seventy-seven ounces, is described as moulded in the form of a bastille or tower, "alle gilt with roses;" and another still larger, "gilt, with many windows." The inventory likewise mentions a spice plate shaped like a double rose, ornamented with the knight's helmet and red roses, part of the blazonry of his arms. Six bowls also embellished with the helmet in enamel, two pottle pots of silver wreathed with foliage, a pair of basins, "alle gilt with an antelope in the midst." Two galot or gallon pots enriched in the "crownes with violet flowers;" four cups, gilt "like fountains, with one columbine flower enamelled in the midst." The remainder of the plate, though rich and weighty, is not so curious and elegant, and therefore may be passed over. The list of the wardrobe is very long, containing an account of an immense quantity of garments of various materials and shapes, in which satin, velvet, and cloth of gold, especially the two former, occur in profuse abundance. The tapestry hangings and cloths of arras, described as the adornments of the state apartments, glowed with vivid embroidery, depicting sacred, heroic, and pastoral subjects. The assumption, and the adoration of the shepherds, belong to the first; in the second, the siege of Falaise and the portraiture of nine conquerors occur; and in the last are represented a grove of poplars, various feats

CHAP. II.

of archery, sylvan personages, hawk in hand, or following the chase, and the favourite character of the middle ages, a wild or "salvage man." In addition to these devices are two which appear to illustrate the popular legends of the time, "a geyaunt berying the legge of a bore," and "a gentlewoman harping by a castle." Nearly all the chambers were furnished with feather beds, and several contained articles which even now are confined to the luxurious abodes of the great: "pillowes of downe," and "bags stuffed with lavender," large carpets and embroidered coverlets. The great hall was appropriately decorated with eleven cross bows, a boar spear, and a target; and the winter-hall was hung with a cloth of arras representing the morysch or morris dance.

There are also numerous weapons and articles of offensive and defensive armour enumerated in the catalogue, but the list of books is exceedingly scanty. Mr. Amyot, whose indefatigable zeal in the service of literature entitles him to the gratitude of all who feel interested in the illustration of ancient modes and manners, observes in the preliminary remarks affixed to his transcription of these rolls, "that the knight's learned Secretary William of Worcester, whose studies he encouraged, and whose chamber is noticed in the inventory, does not seem to have directed his patron's taste to the acquirement of a library, though in his own person he engaged in the pursuit of books with the ardour of a modern bibliomaniac. It appears indeed from a passage in one of the Paston Letters, that Worcester was as eager to procure a good book of French or of poetry as his master Fastolfe was to purchase a fair manor.

another letter in the same collection shews that the secretary had obtained two volumes which had belonged to his patron, though they are not described in the present inventory, one of them a chronicle of Jerusalem, the other a history of Fastolfe's own achievements. On the whole it is probable that Sir John, while he was a liberal benefactor to Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as the sister university, contented himself as his contemporaries of high rank probably did, "with promoting literature by his bounty without partaking of its enjoyments." Mr. Amyot also expresses his surprise at the small quantity of the generous extract of the grape mentioned in these rolls. "It is remarkable that, in a mansion so celebrated for its hospitality, the cellar should be found to contain only two pipes of red wine, and none of any other description." The butlery had its gallon pots and pottles of leather, and the size of the silver flaggons destined for the banquetting hall is sufficient to assure us that, notwithstanding the scanty furniture of his cellars, the knight's board was amply supplied with the exhilarating beverage, then, as at the present time, constituting so important a feature in the banquet. CHAP. II.

Fastolfe, as well as his companions in arms, engaged in the war with France, was a sufferer from the low state of the royal exchequer. The Paston papers contain an account of the losses and damages which he sustained in the king's service, both on the continent and in England. The crown was indebted to him for loans and charges while employed in France, in the sum of four thousand and eighty-three pounds, fifteen shillings, and seven pence; and

CHAP. II. during the space of fifteen years after his abode in Norfolk, he complains that he was obliged to attend the king and council at a great expense, for which it is stated, and for all his service to Henry VI., he had neither fee, wages, reward, nor recompense; his treasures of gold and silver, his wide and fertile lands, his rich effects and sumptuous houses, chiefly gained in that productive war, in which he had been by the favour of the ministry promoted to so many commands of trust and emolument, were not considered an adequate remuneration by a man who, almost burthened with his wealth, continued his solicitations and remonstrances until the last year of his existence. It was impossible in the impoverished state of the revenue for Henry to satisfy the demands continually poured in upon him by courtiers and nobles, whose thirst for gold nothing could appease; and however censurable Fastolfe's avarice may be deemed, he only resembled the great bulk of the nation in his unceasing desire to overflow coffers already filled to the brim. The knight's character seems to have been held in much estimation by his contemporaries; the Paston Letters contain numerous passages wherein he is mentioned with affectionate reverence by his kinsmen and dependents, both before and after his decease. A letter addressed to him by Thomas Bourchier, archbishop of Canterbury, is couched in the kindest and most respectful language. Yelverton, a judge of the King's Bench, whose name has occurred in the preceding pages, styles him "moste worshipfull and best betrusted maister:" and a knight, who was king at arms in the reign of Henry VII., speaks of

him in terms of high praise, calling him, "a rich knight and a grate bilder; having bilded Caster-Hall in Northfolk, a royal palace in Southwark, and another in Yarmouth: a speciall goode maister to the officers of armes," and adds, "was most triumphantly brought in erthe, that I have heard of his degree." CHAP. II.

CHAPTER III.

Predictions respecting the Birth-place of Henry VI.—Prophecy of Henry V.—Exhibition of the Infant King—Acts passed by the Parliament—Henry makes his second Appearance in Public—receives the Honour of Knighthood—he knights his young Companions—Marriage of the Dukes of Bedford and Burgundy, and the Count de Richemont—mean Subterfuge of the latter—Negociations with Scotland—Embassy from that Country—Liberation of the King of Scotland—He is unjustly reproached by the English Historians—Accomplishments of James—his Attachment to the Lady Joan Beaufort—the Monarch's unhappy Fate—his poetical Talents and other Acquirements—Poem of the Duke of Orleans—Division in the English Cabinet—Henry's Coronation—the Banquet—Proposition respecting a Coronation in France—Panic of the English Soldiers—Henry visits France—his Reception at Paris—Processions and Pageants—the King is crowned—Indignation of the French Prelates—Complaints of the Canons—Dislike of the Proceedings by the French—Magnificence of the Banquet—a Tournament—Honours paid to the King on his Return to England—Jealousy of the Duke of Burgundy—Richemont's crooked Policy—War with Bretagne—Spirit of the Duke of Bedford—Co-operation of the Cardinal—the Duke of Bedford's impolitic Marriage—Quarrel between the Dukes of Bedford and Burgundy—Successful Negociations of the French King—Indignation of the English at Burgundy's Defection—Embassy of the Heralds—their Danger—Murders committed in the Metropolis—Answer of the Council—Disrespect offered to Henry—Grief at the Death of the Duke of Bedford—Speech of Charles at the Hero's Tomb—Burgundy's Appeal to the Citizens of Ghent—martial Ardour of the Flemings—their vain Boasts—Conduct on the March to

Calais—confident Expectations of the Flemings—Events of the Siege —Embassy from the Duke of Gloucester—Burgundy's Answer—Discontent of the Flemings—Defeat sustained by the Men of Ghent—Mutiny in the Burgundian Camp—the Duke is compelled to retreat —Gloucester's Exploits in Flanders—Death of two Dowager Queens of England—and of Isabella of France—Funeral of the latter.

CHAP. III.

THE unfortunate events which crowded upon each other in Henry's disastrous reign, were by the superstitious supposed to have been the consequence of his birth at Windsor, a place predestined to bring misery upon the head of that monarch who should first see the light within its fatal precincts, and the calamities which befel the luckless Henry are also supposed to have been foretold by the boding fears of his anxious parent. According to some of the old writers, Henry V., aware of a prediction which menaced evil to those of his family who should enter the world in a spot of such ill-omen, had charged his queen to select some other place for the nativity of her expected infant; and when informed that his commands had been disobeyed, his joy at the birth of a son and heir was checked by a prophetic anticipation of the misfortunes which afterwards befel his only child, and he is said to have exclaimed to the Lord Fitzhugh, his chamberlain and confidential friend, "I, Henry of Monmouth, shall small time reign and much get, and Henry, born at Windsor, shall long time reign and lose all; but God's will be done:"* a tale which though perhaps beneath the dignity of history, may be recorded in a work which professes to give a more minute and familiar representation of the opinions and prejudices of the

* Baker.

CHAP. III.

times than the pages of writers of higher merits and pretensions deign to exhibit.

The infant king, when two years old, was carried by his young and lovely mother from Windsor to London, and lying on her lap as she was borne in a chair through the city to Westminster, was shown to the admiring people; and afterwards placed upon the throne, sanctioned a parliament by his presence.* The acts passed by this assembly were distinguished for their wisdom, justice and humanity; the regulations which limited the protector's power were not framed in that mean spirit of jealousy which was subsequently so apparent: very laudable pains were taken to facilitate the dispatch of business, and to ensure the impartial administration of the laws; all petitions which were to be presented on Wednesdays were directed to be answered on the following Friday, and it was decreed that the bills from the poorest men were to be read first, and the king's sergeant was sworn to give the poorest applicant assistance of true council without any gratuity. This parliament also enacted that in all questions concerning the prerogative of the king the opinions of the judges should be taken.

When Henry had attained his third year he was again brought publicly to London by the queen, and exhibited to his subjects borne in a chair to St. Paul's. The Protector and the Duke of Exeter were stationed at the west door of the cathedral, and each taking a hand led their baby monarch to the steps; he was then carried to the high altar, where he was instructed to bend his infant knees in

* Parliament Rolls, vol. iv.

reverence, and proceeding to the crucifix made his offerings, and afterwards was conveyed into the churchyard, and being placed on horseback rode with his attendants in state through Cheapside and the city towards Southwark, and thence to Kingston. In the following year the young monarch, who appears to have been a child of much promise, was dubbed a knight by his uncle the Duke of Bedford, when called over to England to effect a reconciliation between the Duke of Gloucester and Cardinal Beaufort; and after the performance of this interesting ceremony, the juvenile warrior, we are told, conferred the same honour "upon many of his servants."* While the loyalty of his council was manifested by the public homage which they paid their baby sovereign, the wisdom of Henry's ministers was equally evinced by the measures which they adopted to maintain their authority in the neighbouring kingdom. Although the Duke of Burgundy seemed bound to the English cause by the powerful incitements of interest and revenge, the regent judiciously resolved to strengthen these ties by a marriage with Philip's sister, a princess celebrated for her beauty and her merits, and in order to attach the Duke of Bretagne, whose friendship was a point second only in importance to that of the Burgundian, the more closely to Henry and his government, negociated a matrimonial union between the duke's brother Arthur, Count de Richemont, and the widow of Louis, the late dauphin of France, also the sister of the Duke of Burgundy. The influence possessed by Richemont over the

* Baker.

CHAP. III.

mind of the Duke of Bretagne rendered Bedford doubly anxious to secure his alliance, more especially as there was some reason to fear that the expectation of personal advantage might incline him to join the opposite party, were he left to choose a connection which did not bind him to the House of Burgundy. This prince had been taken prisoner at the battle of Azincourt, but, perhaps out of compliment to his mother, the queen dowager of England, was permitted to visit Bretagne on his parole; before his return Henry V. had ceased to live, and pretending that as his word had been pledged to the deceased monarch alone, death had released him from his engagement; the regent being unable, or deeming it impolitic to attempt to recover his person by force, dissembled the indignation which so poor an evasion inspired, and avoided a quarrel which would have given a potent friend to the young king of France.

The extraordinary honours lavished by Charles VII. upon his Scottish allies, and more particularly upon the two commanders, one of whom he had made constable of France while he created the other Duke of Touraine, and the ardour with which these intrepid soldiers fought in his service, determined the English government to procure a peace with Scotland. The death of the ambitious and intriguing Duke of Albany, and the succession of his son, a weak indolent prince, to the regency, paved the way to this desirable event. The King of Scotland, who had been detained in strict though not harsh confinement for the period of thirteen years, languished to behold his native land again, while the

Scots were equally eager to greet the monarch, whose sad captivity they had so long and so hopelessly lamented. Albany, weary of the cares of government, was extremely willing to resign his authority, and it only remained to settle the terms for the imprisoned king's release. For this purpose the Bishop of Glasgow, the Earl of March, and five knights were dispatched from Scotland, and these envoys were permitted to have an interview with James previous to their final negociation with Henry's ministers: one of the articles of the treaty obliged the monarch to issue his command against the entrance of the Scots in the service of France; and that James might be more effectually weaned from the cause which his subjects espoused with such fiery ardour, the English plenipotentiaries were instructed to accede to any offer of a matrimonial alliance between the royal families of Scotland and England, which might be made for James by the Scottish embassy; but, in consideration of the punctilious observances demanded by female delicacy, to abstain from the first advances towards so desirable an object. Fortunately, the wishes of the king were in accordance with the project of the English ministry.

Henry IV. had in some measure atoned for the violation of a solemn truce in the detention of the heir of Scotland before the period of its termination, by justifying his assertion that he was equally competent with his brother of France to the superintendence of the education of a king. Every facility was afforded to James for the cultivation of his mind, and he became so famous for his accomplish-

CHAP. III.

ments as a scholar, a knight and a gentleman, that after his liberation, when the English found that their unwarrantable expectations from the steadiness of his friendship were disappointed, he was accused of ingratitude towards a kingdom wherein he had been trained to the love of literature, and instructed "in marciall feates and warlike affairs."* Ardently devoted to polite learning, and gifted with genius which exalted him to a level with the most celebrated poets of the age, the captivity of James had been sweetened by the smiles of beauty; an attachment the more delightful from the romance which attended it had sprung up in the monarch's breast, and his heart had freely surrendered its liberty to the fair object, who formed alike the theme and the inspiration of his muse: nor had the graces and the talents of the princely James failed to excite a gentle feeling in return, and happily no obstacle interposed to mar the felicity of the enamoured pair. The rank of Jane Beaufort, the king's enslaver, rendered her eligible to match with royalty; her father the Earl of Somerset was the son of John of Ghent, and her maternal ancestry was equally illustrious: her mother Margaret Holand being descended from Edward I.; accomplished as she was lovely, her beauty and virtues did honour to the monarch's choice.

The marriage took place previous to the departure of James from England, and the connubial happiness of these fondly attached lovers was only interrupted by the ruthless hand which laid the hope and pride of Scotland in a blood stained tomb. The

* Hall.

particulars of that dismal tragedy which plunged Scotland into mourning, and the barbarous punishment adjudged to the regicide and his associates fortunately do not belong to these pages, and the writer turns with gladness from the sickening recollection of the fearful crime and its horrible expiation. Much of the poetry of James I. of Scotland is unhappily lost, but enough has been discovered and brought to light by the diligent researches of the learned, to display the extent and variety of the royal author's intellectual acquirements, both in the graver sciences and in the fine arts; he was deeply read in law, philosophy, and divinity, an excellent grammarian, and a skilful musician, and though ardently devoted to more abstruse studies, "his sweetest lay was given to love."

It is somewhat extraordinary that at one of the darkest periods of human ignorance ever occurring in the Christian world, two of the most illustrious captives, whom the chances of fortune or of war placed in the hands of Henry VI. should have, like caged nightingales, made their gloomy prisons melodious with song. The Duke of Orleans during his long residence in England attached himself to the same pursuits which beguiled the time of his distinguished contemporary, and found in literature a solace in his dreary exile: the duke's "love poems, roundels, and songs," composed in the English language, at that time exceedingly rude and unpolished, are efforts which, considering the difficulties which a foreigner must have experienced in writing in an uncouth and newly acquired tongue, merit very high praise.

CHAP. III.

Hitherto the affairs of the regency had been conducted with the most profound policy, and the welfare of the young king and the good of the nation appeared to be the sole aim of the council and the parliament; but it was scarcely possible for an assembly like the former, presenting so many discordant interests, to continue always unanimous, or to be entirely divested of selfish views, where the members were so frequently and so strongly tempted to render their power subservient to their own private advantage. Indiscretion in some of Henry's ministers proved also as fatal as the more deliberate schemes of others.

Gloucester probably did not foresee the ruinous consequences of his hasty marriage with Jacqueline of Hainault, yet by that rash act the king sustained an injury nearly if not quite equal to those occasioned by the premeditated wiles of crafty men. The struggles for ascendance in the cabinet which ended in the defeat of Gloucester, were likewise productive of infinite mischief to Henry, who at a very early age deprived by the triumphant faction of the guardianship of his truest friend, was delivered into the hands of a party only desirous to keep him in a state of deplorable ignorance and abject subjection to their will.

Anxious to supersede the necessity of a protector, Cardinal Beaufort proposed and carried the measure of the king's coronation, and Henry was henceforth a mere cipher in the hands of his artful ministers; who, as they could not like Gloucester be suspected of aspiring to the crown, were permitted to usurp the whole power into their own hands unques-

tioned and unreproved, except by the fruitless remonstrances of the injured prince, whose just right to the highest place in the council they had so successfully opposed.

1429. The ceremony of Henry's coronation, which took place when he was only eight years old, was performed with much pomp at Westminster. Fabian has preserved a detailed account of the dainties which graced the banquet, a feast not more curious for the splendour of the cookery, than for the information which it affords of the inveteracy of the government against the religious doctrines of Wickliffe's followers. Amid the dishes which crowned the board the worthy citizen enumerates, "A viande royal plantyd losynges of gold. Bore heads in castellys of gold and enarmed. Custardes royal with a lysperde of golde syttynge therein, and holdyng a floure-de-lyse. Viande blanche-barred with gold. Gely pasty wryten and noted with Te Deum Laudamus. A frytour garnished with a leopardes hed and 11 estryche feders. A sotyltee, an emperoure and a kynge, arayed in mantellys of garters, whiche figoured Syggsmunde, the emperoure and Henry the V.; and a fygure like unto Kynge Henry VI. knelynge to foe theym, with this ballade takkyd by him—"

> "Agayne miscreants the Emperor Sygismonde
> Hath shewed his might, which is imperiall,
> And Henry the Fifte a noble knighte was founde,
> For Christe his cause in actes martiale
> Cherished the churche, to Lollars gave a fall;
> Giving example to kynges that succede
> And to their braunche herein especiale,
> While he doth reigne to love God and drede."

CHAP. III.

1430.

In the following year the victories achieved by the maid of Orleans, and the triumphant march of Charles VII. to Rheims, compelled the council to deliberate seriously upon the posture of affairs, and to adopt the most efficacious measures to retrieve the late misfortunes. The result of these consultations was a resolution to act upon the suggestions of the Duke of Bedford and his associates, who strongly advised the English government to send the young king to France to receive the crown, which seemed to be vanishing from his grasp. The recovery of Rheims, a place to which the reverential regard of the French people and the long-established custom of selecting it for the coronation of their sovereigns, had attached vast importance, was also determined upon as a preliminary measure; but the spirit which had animated the early commanders in the war either no longer existed, or was unavailable: the battle cry of a Bedford or a Talbot could not as heretofore draw thousands to the standard of St. George, assured it would lead to victory. Terror of the enchantments of the maid had seized upon the soldiers. Men who were never known to flinch when led against fortresses held by long-established opinion to be impregnable, quailed and fled before that mysterious banner and that spell-working sword wielded by a woman's feeble arm; and it was not found possible to raise a sufficient force even to attempt the enterprize. Henry was therefore obliged to delay his departure until April. He was again stayed at Calais by the impossibility of raising a sufficient escort to conduct him to the metropolis; and it was not until the capture of the luckless Joan

before Compeign that the young king could proceed upon his journey; there being still much difficulty in rallying the failing energy of the soldiers, so deep and so universal was the consternation inspired by the reputation of the maiden's marvellous attributes.* Henry landed in France upon St. George's day, but did not reach Paris until the following November. He was accompanied by a guard of three thousand men; and the Duke of Bedford, the Cardinals of Winchester and of York, his kinsman Richard Plantagenet, whom Monstrelet styles "the rich Duke of York," the Earls of Suffolk, Warwick, and Salisbury, rode in his train, in addition to a numerous attendance of the great lords of France. Half way between St. Denis and Paris the provost of the latter place, with a numerous retinue of burghers attired in crimson-satin doublets and blue hoods, and followed by a large company of the less distinguished citizens clothed in scarlet, advanced to meet and to pay homage to the royal guest. The king having been respectfully greeted by the provost and the citizens, nine persons on horseback, representing the nine worthies, each armed "according to his manner," and intended to personate Joshua, Gideon, Sampson, David, Judas Maccabeus, Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Charlemagne, and Godfrey de Bouillon, came forward to make their obeisances; and a little farther on, the first president of the parliament in his dress of ceremony, followed by the lords of the parliament clad in flowing robes of vermilion, the members of the chamber of accounts, the directors of the finances,

* Rymer.

CHAP. III.

the masters of request, and the secretaries, all decked in gowns of the same colour, awaited to salute their young monarch; each advancing according to his rank, and bending first to him and then to the lords in his train as they passed along. Immense multitudes crowded to gaze upon this splendid cavalcade; "with regard," says Monstrelet, "to the common people they were numberless." At the gate of St. Denis appeared the second of those fantastic exhibitions invented by the genius of the age to amuse the eyes of royalty upon great occasions: the city arms were constructed upon so large a scale as to admit six persons within them: one of them robed as a bishop represented the clergy, a second the university, a third the burghers, and the remainder personated serjeants. On passing through the gate Henry was presented with three crimson hearts; one contained two doves, another was filled with small birds, these being suddenly released from their confinement winged their flight over the young king's head, whose juvenile fancy was no doubt delighted by this pretty incident. The third heart when opened presented rich clusters of violets and other flowers, which were thrown in a fragrant shower over the accompanying nobles. Immediately upon his entrance into the city, the provost and burghers raised an azure-coloured canopy studded with the fleur de lys, over the king's head; and at the bridge of St. Denis, beneath the green boughs of a mimic forest, three savages and a woman were seen in combat together; and under the scaffold, upon which this sylvan pageant was raised, a fountain of Hippocras spouted forth, surrounded by three

swimming mermaids; the sparkling beverage kept in a continual flow for the benefit of all who chose to stoop and taste it. At the second gate of St. Denis, the wondering eyes of the royal child were presented with a pantomimic representation of the nativity of the holy virgin, her marriage, the adoration of the three kings, the massacre of the innocents, and a venerable man sowing the good seed; "which characters," we are told by Monstrelet, "were specially well acted." The legendary history of St. Denis was depicted over the gate, and elicited much admiration from the English spectators. A more interesting scene awaited Henry at the church of the Innocents: the whole street was converted into a forest. At the monarch's approach a stag bounded forth from the woody covert, followed by a sweeping train of huntsmen and dogs, and after a brisk chace the sagacious animal (performing his part to admiration) directed his fleet steps to the king's horse, and was saved by the protector he had been so well instructed to choose. The last pageant exhibited a group of princes and nobles; the centre person intended to pourtray King Henry VI. clothed in a robe ornamented with the fleur de lys, with the Duke of Burgundy and the Count de Nevers on his right hand, and the Duke of Bedford with the Earls of Warwick and Salisbury on his left; the former presenting the shield of France, the latter that of England, each person decorated with his proper tabard of arms. Upon the king's arrival at the palace, the holy relics were shewn to him and his barons. After dinner he paid a visit to his grandmother the dowager Queen of France, and the next

CHAP. III.

1430.

morning repaired to the castle of Vincennes, where he remained until the day appointed for his coronation.

This ceremony took place on the seventeenth of November. Henry, attended by a numerous and splendid retinue of the nobility and the ecclesiastics, proceeded to the church of Notre Dame. At the celebration of this solemn rite the harmony which had previously subsisted between the French and the English sustained a slight interruption from the jarring pretensions of the Cardinal of Winchester and the Bishop of Paris. The haughty Beaufort insisted upon taking the most conspicuous part in the ceremonial, and placed the crown upon the king's brow in despite of the rival prelate's claim to the right of performing this sacred and honourable office; nor was he content with the usurpation of one privilege, but chaunted the high mass also, to the great displeasure of the mortified bishop. Another cause of complaint arose from the seizure by Henry's officers of a silver cup, containing the wine which, in compliance with ancient custom, the king had presented at the offertory, and which was demanded as their legal perquisite by the canons of the cathedral.

The enraged ecclesiastics pleaded their cause before the council, and after they had spent large sums of money in support of their claim, it was allowed, and the disputed vessel restored. The innovations upon long established usages introduced by the English were not pleasing to Henry's foreign subjects, who saw their ancient rights, which they had been accustomed to regard with reverence, superseded by new and foreign fashions: the disadvantage occasioned by the loss of Rheims was but too evi-

dent, and it was perhaps as much a matter of necessity as of choice that deprived the spectacle of half its attractions, in substituting strange ceremonies for those old familiar observances with which an enthusiastic nation had been wont to crown their native kings. The great mass of the people looked with little interest at a ceremony which we are told was performed "more after the English than the French mode."*

The banquet which succeeded was calculated to give more satisfaction, it being of the most sumptuous description, and crowded with dishes too numerous to be recorded even by so diligent a chronicler as Monstrelet. The young king, who sate at a marble table in the centre of the hall, was together with his nobles entertained by four pageants, and the repast was also enlivened by animating strains of music waked by minstrels cunning in their art. On the following day the festivities were concluded by a grand tournament, in which the Earl of Arundel and the bastard of St. Paul gained the prizes and won the admiration of the fair spectators as the most gallant tilters of the field. After the residence of a few days at Paris Henry repaired to Rouen, where he kept his Christmas, and quitting a kingdom to which he was destined never to return, landed at Dover on the ninth of February 1431, and proceeded by easy stages to the metropolis. The king's reception in England was both gorgeous and flattering; pageants were devised, and cavalcades assembled as glittering and tasteless as those which had greeted him in his foreign dominions. He was escorted from

* Monstrelet.

CHAP. III.

Barham Downs to Blackheath by the gentlemen of Kent in red hoods;* at the latter place the royal train was joined by the Lord Mayor of London and the aldermen in scarlet, and a deputation of the citizens clothed in white. In the pageants which were stationed at the bridge and at the conduits, there were even more than the usual proportion of the abstract virtues, oddly enough personated by ladies dressed in bawdricks of blue, or draperied in flowing robes powdered with stars of gold, who issuing out of goodly towers, curious tabernacles, or fragrant bowers, shadowed by mimic exotics, and refreshed by the wells of Mercy, Grace and Pity, lavished courtly panegyrics mingled with more homely advice upon the monarch as he passed along. Besides the glimpse of Paradise afforded by the genius of Cheapside, in which the generous fountains were supplied with wine instead of water, a most potent and stupendous giant, a child of extraordinary beauty decked with the kingly crown, and a venerable patriarch in full costume diversified the female groupes; and the whole spectacle was finished by one of those devices from which the pious Christian of modern days would turn with disgust, though doubtless the invention of devout minds which saw neither sin nor absurdity in giving a representation of the deity according to their own gross conceptions of his person and attributes. After the infliction of a vast number of verses from nearly every individual belonging to the dramatis personæ of a show, which began at London Bridge and ended at the Cathedral,

* Fabian.

Henry at the conclusion of divine service was conducted in state to his palace.

The triple alliance which the Regent had effected with Burgundy and Bretagne was early threatened with dissolution. Philip's affection for the English was considerably weakened by his fierce dispute with Gloucester, and though Bedford's unremitting exertions at length produced the outward appearance of amity, every angry passion still continued to flame within his indignant heart; and the alienation gradually commenced which ended in open war. The intriguing Richemont allured to the French monarch's court by a splendid bribe, the high office of constable, vacant by the death of the Earl of Buchan, had persuaded his brother to quit the banner of Henry of Lancaster, for that of Charles of Anjou;* and the English, enraged at this disgraceful breach of a solemn treaty, turned their swords against Bretagne. The duke, dismayed at the devastation committed by his exasperated enemies, solicited and obtained a truce for three months, which was strictly kept on both sides; but at the expiration of the stipulated period, still disagreeing upon the terms proposed for peace, hostilities recommenced with greater fury than ever, and the English though gaining new honours and laurels in these campaigns, were by engaging on fresh ground diverted from the pursuit of their conquests in France. Misfortune and error followed each other in rapid succession until both became irreparable; the siege of Orleans too rashly undertaken was fraught with ruin, yet still the vigorous spirit of Bedford delayed the final stroke

* Monstrelet.

CHAP. III.

with scanty supplies from England, nearly drained of all her wealth in the support of an almost interminable war; deprived by death of his most able commander, and compelled to rally the panic-struck fugitives who had learned to fly before their lately despised foes, he contrived to keep Charles at bay, and to maintain possession of a large tract of country, and numerous important garrisons. The opportune assistance afforded by the warlike cardinal, who braved the anger of the Pope by relinquishing the crusade against the Bohemian reformers, to prop his young kinsman's falling power in France, enabled Bedford to keep for a short time longer his formidable position in the centre of a kingdom once so nearly conquered; but even this wise and cautious prince suffered himself to be betrayed into an act of the highest imprudence. In despite of his most strenuous endeavours Charles gained ground; vainly had he attempted to revive the fading loyalty of Henry's French subjects by the pageant of a coronation, and as vainly had he delivered the persecuted Maid of Orleans to the flames: the English cause was evidently declining; yet, at the moment wherein Burgundy's friendship had become more valuable than ever, he suddenly contracted a marriage which could not fail to be displeasing to the impetuous duke, already offended by the proud tenacity with which Orleans had been withheld by the English, when its citizens offered to place it in his hands in trust for their absent prince.

Upon the death of his consort, the regent is represented to have been overwhelmed with affliction, the loss of one so virtuous and so fair was in itself a

sufficient cause for grief, without those gloomy anticipations of Burgundy's defection which it was calculated to inspire; but notwithstanding the strong reason which Bedford had for lamentation, the days of his mourning were speedily terminated, and allowing himself to be fascinated by the charms of Jacqueline of Luxemburg, daughter of the Count de St. Paul, he led her to the altar without consulting the Duke of Burgundy, who we are told was highly offended by the disrespectful omission. The regent celebrated his nuptials with much pomp, at the episcopal palace of Therouenne,* and in commemoration of the event presented the church with two magnificent bells, procured from England at his own expence.

The effect produced upon the mind of Burgundy by this inauspicious marriage was soon visible; his bitter remarks were reported to Bedford, and the angry replies of the conscious prince conveyed with the same officious malice to the Burgundian's ears. Alarmed by the symptoms of enmity which were daily developed Cardinal Beaufort zealously exerted himself in mediating between these now estranged kinsmen, and succeeded at length in persuading them to meet each other at St. Omer: and here Bedford committed a second error more unpardonable and more irremediable than the first. Arrangements had been made for the interview of the two dukes, without compromising the dignity of either or exacting any undue deference from the one to the other, but the regent instead of repairing to the appointed spot peremptorily insisted upon receiving a previous visit

* Monstrelet.

CHAP. III.

from the Duke of Burgundy at his own quarters. The well wishers of both parties hurried to and fro with anxious solicitations to each striving to prevail upon Burgundy to submit, and endeavouring to persuade Bedford to waive the disputed point, but both remained stubbornly obstinate. Cardinal Beaufort made a final appeal to the Duke of Burgundy's hospitality, and drawing him aside, said in a friendly manner, "How is this, fair nephew, that you refuse to compliment a prince who is son and brother to a king, by calling on him when he has taken so much trouble to meet you in one of your own towns, and that you will neither visit nor speak to him!"* The Duke replied that he was ready to pay his respects to the regent at the appointed place, and the prelate, compelled to relinquish his unavailing efforts to bend the spirits of these haughty princes, saw them both depart from the town without meeting, and more discontented with each other's conduct than ever.

The partizans of Charles now found a willing auditor in Burgundy; the politic monarch dismissed all those persons from his court who had been concerned in the assassination of the duke's father, and pleaded his youth, his inexperience, and his utter inability either to prevent or to punish a deed which he alleged had been undertaken without his knowledge or consent, in excuse of his apparent participation in the murder. Burgundy had satiated himself in the blood of France which had died his avenging sword even to the hilt, and he perceived that his own interests were involved in a peace with Charles, and that a continuation of the war would only gratify

* Monstrelet.

the ambition of his ally, without producing the slightest benefit to himself; he dissembled for a short time, but at the congress of Arras threw off the mask, and the English were left to combat single-handed with France, Burgundy, and Bretagne.

The news of the Duke of Burgundy's defalcation was received in England with mingled anger and grief. Philip upon his reconciliation with the French monarch sent the explanatory letters already mentioned in a former part of this work, to Henry VI. by two heralds, one of whom was king-at-arms of the order of the Golden Fleece, and these officers were accompanied by a mendicant friar, instructed by the pope's legate to remonstrate publicly with the King of England and his council on the infinite cruelty of prolonging a war which had already desolated a christian land, and to employ all his eloquence in representing the blessings that would ensue if a lasting peace could be concluded between the two kingdoms. Whether the friar's rhetoric would have had sufficient influence to produce so desirable an event must ever remain unknown, for he was not permitted to make his intended oration, the council being in no humour to listen to advice coming from so questionable a quarter. The ministers of the holy see could not have made a more injudicious choice in the escort of their ambassador, or selected a more unseasonable moment for their interference. So strongly were the English people irritated by the conduct of the Duke of Burgundy, that it was even dangerous for the heralds to appear in the streets, notwithstanding the protection afforded by the laws of honour to the persons of men who were invested

CHAP. III.

with an office held sacred from the most barbarous times; and to ensure their safety they were committed to the care of some of Henry's pursuivants, and only stole out occasionally to hear mass. They were denied an audience with the king, and were apprehensive the whole time of their residence in England of sustaining some personal injury in consequence of the disagreeable information which they had conveyed; nor were their fears without foundation, for the instant that the report of Burgundy's defection was made public the fury of the rabble of London was aroused to madness, and directed indiscriminately against all foreigners; many horrible outrages and even murders were committed before the magistrates could stay the brutal hands of the enraged populace, or prevent the general massacre of those unfortunate strangers whom they had marked out for destruction.*

The council refused to send a written answer to the Duke of Burgundy's letter, and dismissed the heralds with a verbal message, merely stating, that "the king, with the princes of his blood and his council, had seen and examined the letters they had brought, and that they had been equally surprised at their contents as at the conduct of the duke, for which, if it pleased God, the king would find a remedy."† The heralds were farther informed that they were at liberty to return to their own country, and being unable to obtain a more respectful reply to the communication of the duke their master, proceeded homewards to report the ill success of their ungracious errand.

* Hall. † Monstrelet.

In addition to the unpalatable nature of the contents, the style of Burgundy's letter was calculated to give umbrage to the English council. He purposely omitted the title of King of France in the superscription; nor did he, according to former custom, call Henry his sovereign lord, merely addressing him as the high and mighty Prince Henry, by the grace of God King of England, his well-beloved cousin. An object of unqualified hatred to the whole nation, Burgundy's name was never mentioned in any circle from the highest to the lowest rank of the community without eliciting the bitterest invective. The English had not exhausted their animadversions and complaints at the insolence and perfidy of their treacherous ally, before they experienced deeper cause for grief in the death of the gallant Bedford; the remains of the hero were interred under a tomb of black marble, on the north side of the high altar of the cathedral church of Rouen, amid the tears and lamentations of his dejected friends. Upon the recovery of Normandy, the courtiers of France advised their monarch to destroy a monument which commemorated the triumphs of the English arms; but Charles, more generous in his animosity to those brave enemies from whom he had wrested his crown by almost a miracle, exclaimed, "Let him repose in peace; we may be thankful that he sleeps here, for when awake he gave disquietude to the stoutest heart amongst us!"*

The sudden dissolution of the alliance between the English and the Burgundians produced the most inveterate enmity on both sides; and Philip,

* Hall.

CHAP. III.

burning to avenge the continual affronts offered by his new enemies, resolved to besiege Calais, a town which in former times had formed a part of the inheritance of his ancestors. Hastening to Ghent,* the duke invited the citizens and burghers to repair to the banqueting hall; and better versed in the art of war than accomplished in rhetoric, entrusted one of his councillors with the representation of his grievances. The people were told of the undoubted right which the duke possessed to the town of Calais, a part of his dominions long held by force against him by the English, who since the peace of Arras had been guilty of numerous aggressions upon his subjects, and who had defamed his person and honour in various proclamations; insults which he could not suffer tamely without incurring disgrace. And when the assembly were moved to indignation by the detail of affronts offered to their sovereign, they were exhorted to supply him with men and money for the conquest of Calais, a place which the orator affirmed was by the occupation of the English exceedingly prejudicial to all Flanders: the commerce of the Flemings being carried on at a considerable disadvantage, as they were compelled in their barter for merchandize to pay the English traders either in ingots of refined gold or silver or in money, at the low rate at which the inhabitants using their own discretion chose to value it. The citizens of Ghent enflamed by this harangue, eagerly assented to the duke's wishes, and disdaining to deliberate calmly upon the expedience of rushing headlong into so difficult an undertaking, or to consult th

* Monstrelet.

other members of their body who had a right to a voice upon so important a point, or to listen to the advice of a few wise nobles who differed with them in opinion, pledged themselves to support the war.*

The whole of Flanders caught the flame. The ostentation of the inhabitants, we are told, being the strongest motive for their alacrity, they were desirous to shew how sumptuously they were equipped with arms and other martial habiliments, and when decked in their costly trappings fancied that no fortress would be able to withstand them. Hall, in his homely language, has depicted the pompous arrogance of these self-sufficient warriors in a very entertaining manner. "Lord! how the Flemines bragged and the Hollanders craked, that Calice should be wonne and all the Englishmen slaine; swearyng and staryng that they should have it within thre daies at the moste; thynking verely, that the toune of Calice could no more resist their puyssance than a pottle of double beere when they fall to quaffyng." Proverbial for their riches, the Duke of Burgundy's Flemish subjects spared no expense in preparation; but the moment they embarked upon actual service their spirits failed them, and they began to utter complaints of the unexpected hardships which they were compelled to endure. The quota of troops furnished by Ghent were mustered at eight o'clock in the morning, but were detained for the space of four hours in the market place, and did not quit the city until noon. The Duke of Burgundy accompanied them for a short distance on the road, and then proceeded to Bruges to facilitate

* Monstrelet.

CHAP. III.

the movements of the forces from that place. The weather being sultry the corpulent inhabitants of Ghent suffered exceedingly from the heat; two of their captains and several of the soldiers overpowered by the fierce rays of the sun dropped down dead; other disasters occurred on their route. One-and-twenty of these undisciplined recruits were hanged for pillaging the peasants, and taking the law into their own hands they burned two mills as a punishment for the alleged cowardice of their owners in a late combat with the English. After the march of a few days they made their appearance before Calais, and their encampment, from the regularity of its construction and the number and splendour of its tents, formed a very magnificent spectacle.*

The strength of his armament evinced the eager desire which Burgundy felt to deprive England of one of its most important acquisitions; failure was considered to be impossible, and Monstrelet informs us, that, "the Flemings were so presumptuous that they thought nothing could be done without them," and even imagined that the English from fear of them would abandon Calais and fly to England. "This," says the Chronicler, "was frequently the subject of their conversation with the Picards, adding, that they well knew that when the English should be informed that their lords of Ghent were in arms against them, they would not run the risk of being conquered, but make a timely retreat; that it was an act of great negligence in the fleet not to have advanced prior to their arrival before the port of Calais, to cut off their escape."

* Monstrelet.

The garrison of Calais however were not impressed with such exalted notions of the prowess of their assailants; they calmly turned out their cattle to graze before the walls, mortified their enemies by unlading the vessels which arrived daily from England unmolested by the Burgundian navy, and seizing upon a fleet of hulks filled with stones, which was intended to choke up the harbour, broke up the vessels and carried the wood away for fuel, to the astonishment of the admiral, by whose clumsiness this notable contrivance, instead of the anticipated damage, afforded a cheap triumph to the enemy.

The report of the Duke of Burgundy's meditated attempt upon Calais rendered Gloucester, who ardently desired to signalize himself in deeds of arms, more than ever anxious to oppose him in the field, and at his particular request he was appointed to the command of an army to be raised for the defence of the town. Apprehensive that Burgundy would abandon the enterprize before he could sail from England, he dispatched a herald to the duke, to say, that with God's permission he would very shortly attack him and his whole army if he would await his arrival; and should he raise the siege and depart, he would seek him in his own territories. The herald concluded by expressing the regret of the prince his master, that he could not fix upon any day for his landing, as that must depend upon the winds, which were unsteady, and would not allow him to cross the sea at his pleasure. The Duke of Burgundy replied, that Gloucester would not be compelled to seek him in any other place; and unless some misfortune should befall him, he should be

CHAP. III.

found before the walls of Calais. But though so often on the point of encountering each other, these princes never actually met in arms.

The Flemings discomfited by the failure of their egregious expectations, and vexed by the losses which they daily sustained in their skirmishes with the enemy, began to murmur amongst themselves; they were farther incensed by the conduct of the admiral, who instead of bringing up his ships to co-operate with the land forces, sailed away, the waves being too rough to allow him to remain long before Calais, and moreover feeling himself too weak to cope with the fleet preparing in the English ports to dispute the sea with him.*

The factious spirit and contempt of subordination which characterized the Flemings, speedily displayed itself. The Duke of Burgundy unsuspicious of the gathering storm engaged actively in raising new levies; he caused accurate surveys of the ground to be made, in expectation of a battle with Gloucester, and proposed a plan of operations to his council which met with universal approbation; but the hopes he cherished from these judicious arrangements were suddenly and utterly destroyed by the revolt of a part of his troops. On the very day in which the council had been convened the besieged made a spirited sally, directing their arms against a block-house, a work constructed by the Burgundians upon an eminence near Calais, from whence they could command a view of the town. Nearly four hundred of the men of Ghent had been selected to garrison and protect this place; upon the unexpected advance of

* Monstrelet.

the English they gave so loud an alarm that the whole Burgundian camp were put into confusion, and flew hastily to arms. Vast multitudes rushed promiscuously to the defence of the block-house, even the duke himself speeded thither on foot; but before any effective measure could be taken for its relief it was stormed by the English, whose vigorous assault had been very weakly repelled: one hundred and twenty of the garrison were put to the sword, and nearly the whole of the remainder fell into the enemy's hands, and being conducted prisoners to Calais several were slain before the gates, in revenge for the loss of an English knight whom the Picards had taken in the action and killed after his surrender. The men of Ghent dismayed by the slaughter of their comrades, and perceiving that the capture of Calais was not so easy an achievement as they had fondly flattered themselves it would have been, became totally ungovernable; they filled the camp with their clamorous outcries, and vehemently expressed their determination to strike their colours and return home. The Duke of Burgundy made a fruitless attempt to appease them: they were deaf to entreaty and remonstrance; it was in vain that he declared to them that his honour stood pledged to abide the meeting with the Duke of Gloucester, they preferred their own safety to the reputation of their sovereign, and finding it impossible to persuade these base recreants to lend him any farther assistance, he only urged them to remain until the morrow to afford him time to conduct their retreat in good order, offering to escort them in person as far as Gravelines. They gave the promise which he re-

CHAP. III.

quired, but by their turbulent conduct raised a mutiny in the camp, which broke up in a tumultuous manner, and leaving a large portion of provisions, wine, and even their own effects behind them, followed by the men of Bruges, and other parts of Flanders, they commenced their disorderly flight.*

1437. The Duke of Burgundy, overwhelmed with grief, put himself and his men-at-arms in battle array to cover the retreat of the fugitives, and to prevent the English garrison from sallying out in pursuit of their flying foes. The duke compelled to form his most experienced soldiers into a rear guard instead of leading them against the English, dispirited, and hopeless of sustaining a combat with an enemy flushed with their recent triumphs, followed the panic struck Flemings so far that Gloucester who landed in Picardy at the head of ten thousand men a few days after the siege of Calais had been raised, though using the utmost diligence could not overtake him, and after devastating the country in his sweeping march, was obliged by the sickness of his troops to return and place them in secure quarters. The garrisons of Calais and Guisnes, who marked the disgraceful retreat of the besieging army with exulting shouts, rushed out to seize upon the baggage and military stores which they had abandoned in their haste, and obtained a considerable booty.

From this period the war languished upon the continent; the English and the Burgundians consented to a suspension of hostilities, and the break-

* Monstrelet.

ing out of the plague, which ravaged France and England, prevented the belligerent powers from being in a condition to take the field. Two years afterwards, 1439, Talbot retook Harfleur, and the Count de Richemont, constable of France, signalized himself in some brilliant exploits which were however of trifling national importance.*

In the year 1437, England had been deprived by death of its two dowager queens, Jane of Navarre, the widow of Henry IV., and Catherine of Anjou, the wife of Owen Tudor. The former expired at Havering Bower, and was buried by her husband's side in his magnificent tomb at Canterbury. Catherine, who had degraded herself in the eyes of the nation by her hasty second marriage, was interred, though with little pomp, in Westminster Abbey; and she was unfortunate in the choice of a sepulchre, for her body was removed at the erection of the chapel of Henry VII., when the monarch, though usually paying profound respect to the memory of the princes of the House of Lancaster, suffered it to remain above ground; a sacrilege respecting which some of the old writers do not scruple to teach that it was permitted as a punishment for Catharine's disobedience, in selecting Windsor Castle for the birthplace of her son, against the strict commands of the too prophetic Henry. Catharine survived her mother, Isabel of Bavaria, the dowager Queen of France, only a few years. That once honoured and haughty princess died in great poverty in Paris, unesteemed and unlamented by the nation whose ruin she had so nearly effected. She was buried in the church of

* Monstrelet.

CHAP. III.

St. Denis, but her obsequies were not celebrated with the pomp usually observed in France at the interment of a crowned head. The Duke of Burgundy upon being made acquainted with her decease honoured her memory by a grand and solemn mass, which at his command was performed by the bishop, at the church of St. Waast, at Arras, at which he attended in person, dressed in deep mourning, and supported by the Count d'Estampes, the Count de Vendome, the heir of the Duke of Cleves, and many other ecclesiastical and secular lords, also in funereal robes.*

* Monstrelet.

CHAPTER IV.

Effects of Henry's Education—Errors of his Government—Injudicious Gifts to his Favourites—Anger of the Duke of Buckingham—Character of the Duke of Warwick—Henry's pecuniary Embarrassments—Description of the Jewels pledged to Cardinal Beaufort—Suffolk and the Queen usurp all the Patronage—Henry's Love of the Chace—Neglect of the Tilt by the Warriors of his Time—Henry's Place amid the royal Authors—his Love of Literature—Gloucester's Patronage of Letters—his Collection of Books—Lydgate's Poetry—Versatility of his Talents—his Gallantry to the Fair Sex—his Travels—multiplicity of his Compositions—Other Poets of the Time—MSS. collected by the Duke of Bedford—Decay of Learning—Queen's College, Cambridge, founded by Margaret—and completed by Elizabeth Wydeville—The Ordeal of Battle—Appeals of Treason—Massacre of the Bishop of Salisbury—and of the Bishop of Gloucester—Riot upon St. Bartholomew's Day—Gallantry of the Lord Mayor—Brawl in Holborn—Hall's Account of an Affray between an English Merchant and an Italian—Female Deputation to Parliament—Murder perpetrated by Women in Whitechapel—Wrongs sustained by wealthy Heiresses—Laws of Chivalry—Religious Persecution—Crimes of the Priesthood—Errors of the Church—Humble Station of the Reformers—Execution of six Martyrs—Conduct of the Lollards at St. Albans—Imprisonment of Reginald Peacocke—Support afforded to the Church by the House of York—Embassy from the Pope—Portents preceding the Civil Wars.

CHAP. IV.

THE abject state of tutelage in which Henry VI. was detained by an overbearing council, formed a subject of animadversion at the neighbouring courts. Upon the king's marriage with Margaret of Anjou,

CHAP. IV.

the father of the bride advised his daughter to take her husband out of the hands of his too officious guardians: but though Margaret acted promptly and vigorously upon this suggestion, the time had elapsed in which the king might have profited by his release from the iron sway which had entered into his soul. Henry's spirit was broken, his ardour checked, and his intellects, not cultivated nor permitted to expand, were wasted upon trivial occupations and pursuits which were either absurd or injudicious; yet during his long and most inglorious reign, there were moments of strong excitement: when roused to exertion the brighter genius of his ancestors displayed itself, and shewed that beneath a sterile soil were implanted seeds of great promise, which only required the fostering hand of care to have put out branches and buds which would have ripened into flowers and fruit. Long accustomed to passive obedience, Henry at his marriage only quitted slavery under his ministers for a state of subjection as servile to a more dangerous guide—an imperious woman, whose spirit far outstripped her discretion, and who linked her husband to ruin with a more indissoluble chain than that which previously bound him, since he might have been rescued by the nation from the evil councillors who thronged his cabinet, but could have no chance of escape, except by death, from the rash adviser who was for ever at his side.

With his own virtuous inclinations, Henry's government would have been mild and fortunate, had his ministers possessed more wisdom and more honesty; but from the waste and mismanagement of

the revenue, the oppressive weight of the taxes, and the shameless rapacity of those appointed to levy these odious burthens, very direful consequences arose, and even Henry's most rational and beneficial employments became burthensome to the nation. The beautiful structure at Cambridge, King's College Chapel, a monument of the monarch's taste for the quietude of learned repose, his love of science, and his paternal regard for the best interests of posterity, was undertaken without the slightest calculation of the expense, at a period in which nothing, save a system founded upon the most rigid economy, could have placed the pecuniary affairs of the government in a flourishing condition.

Henry's personal attachments to those around him were very strong, but almost every indication of the goodness of his heart was linked with some weakness, more the offspring of misdirected feelings than of natural imbecility; his kindest and most affectionate gifts to his friends were often in his zeal to enhance their value productive of mortification or insult to others. Not content with raising his favourites to the peerage, he frequently gave them precedence above the ancient nobles of his court:* to his half brothers Jasper Earl of Pembroke, and Edmund Earl of Richmond, he granted the invidious right of sitting in parliament next to the dukes. Besides the successive dignities of marquis and of duke conferred upon Suffolk, he gave to him and his heirs male, the privilege of bearing a wand of gold surmounted by a dove, at the coronation of the king, and an ivory wand of similar form at the

* Dugdale.

CHAP. IV.

coronation of the Queen of England, whenever it might take place, a distinction which was beheld by the representatives of older families with an envious eye.

The injudicious honour conferred upon Henry Earl of Warwick, the son of the king's late governor, the chivalric Richard Beauchamp, has been already mentioned as the source of jealousy and dispute upon the part of the Duke of Buckingham, who was entitled by his ducal rank and his descent from a line ennobled during many preceding generations, to the highest seat in parliament next to the princes of the blood. Henry had already placed his favourite at the head of the earls, without giving any consideration to their superior claims; and he farther distinguished him from his equals in the peerage, by permitting him to wear a coronet of gold upon his head, "as well in the royal presence as elsewhere." When advanced with similar privileges to the rank of a duke, Henry in the open indignation of Buckingham, perceived his error, and was obliged to qualify his rash grant by conditions which produced submission without satisfying either party. The king endeavoured to make the new duke amends for the partial disappointment of his ambition, by lavish gifts of lands and dignities; he bestowed upon him the grant of Jersey, Guernsey, and their dependencies, upon the payment of the yearly rent of a rose, to be presented at the feast of the nativity of St. John the Baptist, and consoled himself for the loss of the regal diadem of France, and all its valuable fiefs, by giving away a sovreignty to this highly favoured nobleman, who with his own hands he crowned King of the Isle of

Wight.* Henry Beauchamp whom the monarch had dignified by so many proofs of his affection is described by Dugdale as a youth of promise, who before he had attained his nineteenth year, offered his services in defence of Guienne. His early death vested his immense possessions in the hands of his sister, by whose marriage with Richard Nevill, a close connection of the House of York, the monarch's munificent grants were turned against his throne.

Early impressed with exalted ideas of the liberality so well becoming a crowned head, it is perhaps always difficult for the justice of a king to keep pace with his generosity. Henry was deeply in debt to all his commanders in the French wars; campaigns which were ruinous to the sovereigns and the nation in consequence of the misapplication of spoils wholly relinquished to the captors of cities, towns and castles, and the governors of provinces, instead of being more wisely appropriated to the support of the army. France might assuredly have been maintained without the slightest expense to the conquering country; but measures which would have reduced the enormous profits of mercenary nobles to their proper limits, might have been too hazardous even for the attempt of the boldest and most able minister, in an age in which public opinion had little influence over the minds of the rich and great, and public good was rarely if ever considered. Henry therefore was only culpable in the indulgence of liberality which deprived him of the power of discharging the demands of those from whom he had

* Dugdale.

CHAP. IV.

actually borrowed money, or who possessed higher claims to pecuniary reward; his involvements with various persons were numerous and heavy, and he owed so large a sum to the Bishop of Winchester, that he was compelled to place the richest portion of the royal effects into his hands as a security.* The catalogue of jewels pledged by Henry in the seventeenth year of his reign to Cardinal Beaufort, contains a detailed account of many splendid and costly articles; the names and purposes of some of these are unintelligible to all save the most erudite of antiquaries; but we may form a pretty accurate idea of their beauty and value by the description of others couched in less obsolete language. A sword of gold, called the sword of Spain, garnished with a vast number of precious stones, weighing in all ten marks and a half "and half an ounce of troye;" a tablet of gold embellished with a delineation of the passion of Christ, "in ye manner of a boke," also splendidly set with gems. Another tablet of gold of St. George, which appears to have been most superbly decorated with various devices and enriched with jewels. A third, likewise of gold, of the salutation of our lady, equally splendid. Two pots of gold weighing thirty-three ounces, a chalice and two cruets, a pair of basins silver gilt and chased with roses; a large alms dish of silver gilt, made in the form of a ship, "full of men at arms fighting on the ship's side;" two large chargers and six smaller ones; forty dishes of divers sorts, and twenty-three

* Liber Memorandum Camerariorum Receptæ Icacarii; presented by John Caley, Esq. F. R. S. and S. A. to the Society of Antiquaries, and printed in vol. 21 of the Archæologia.

saucers gilt; a standing cup of gold, and a gold ewer richly garnished; a standing tablet of gold, "with an image of our lady enamelled in white on the top, and on every side an aungell, weighing twenty-seven ounces and three quarters, price every ounce xxiij*s.* iij*d.*;" also a flat tablet of gold "with a piece of *tunica inconsutil* garnyshed with twenty-five great ples," weighing forty ounces.

Under the government of Suffolk and the queen, Henry's power of promoting his friends was considerably diminished. We are told that he was strongly attached to Stanbery Bishop of Hereford, a pious and zealous divine, and one of the most faithful adherents whom the pope possessed in England. Henry appointed this learned ecclesiastic to be his confessor, and was anxious to confer upon him the rich bishopric of Norwich; but, observes our author, "William de la Pole Duke of Suffolk was then so potent that he seized upon the valuable see for his own chaplain,"* and Henry's patronage could only extend to the poor bishopric of Bangor, with which for the present Stanbery was obliged to be content. He served the monarch diligently, and was taken prisoner while attending upon him, and suffered a long imprisonment in Warwick castle.

The chace seems to have been Henry's favourite amusement; for although tournaments are mentioned as occurring sometimes at his court, he does not appear either to have engaged himself or taken any delight in witnessing these martial exercises; and during the latter part of his reign there was too much serious fighting to render the introduction of

* Prince's Worthies of Devon.

CHAP. IV.

a mimic war in these spirit-stirring sports necessary to keep the warrior's lance from rusting, or his frame from effeminacy. The names of the king-making Warwick, of his father the brave Salisbury, of that dauntless soldier, Edward Earl of March, of Hungerford, Oxford, Pembroke, or of any of the stoutest of the Lancastrian chiefs, are never mentioned as seeking distinction at the tilt, and Lord Rivers appears to have the sole honour of supporting England's fame in this chivalric accomplishment.

Henry VI. has obtained a place amid the royal authors, but his pretensions rest upon very doubtful authority. A short poem transcribed by Sir John Harrington from a manuscript book in his grandfathers' hand-writing, was attributed to the monarch's pen, and upon this supposition Sir John Harrington imparted his discovery to Prince Henry, the eldest son of James I.

The knight observes, that the stanzas which he presents suit the temper and condition of him who composed them; but more diligent inquiry respecting their authenticity has rendered Henry's claim to the honours of a poet a very disputable point; they form a part of a legend in verse, printed in the Mirror for Magistrates in 1559, which sets forth "How Kyng Henry the syxt, a vertuous prince, was after many other miseries cruelly murdered in the Tower of London." These verses are followed by two moral sentences in prose, copied by Sir John Harrington from the same book, and signed Henrie. *"Patience ys the armore and conqueste of the godlie: thys merytythe mercie when causlesse ye suffered sor-

* Parke's Edition of Walpole's Royal Authors.

crow. Noughte els ys warre bote furie and madnesse, wherein ys not advyse bote rashnesse; not ryghte, bote rage ruleth and raigneth." Had not these sage reflections appeared in conjunction with stanzas evidently borrowed from a work which very faithfully depicts the entire resignation and pacific disposition of the pious monarch, and therefore selected as singularly applicable to his temper and feelings, there would be no hesitation in pronouncing them to be the genuine effusions of his contemplative mind, especially as the learned Dr. Pegge* assures us that Henry employed his pen in original composition; and in support of his assertion states, that a manuscript manual in his possession contained "a prayer by Henry VI. of England."

The splendid foundation at Eton, and the magnificent plan for a college at Cambridge, fully entitle Henry VI. to rank as a patron of literature. Amid the monarch's contemporaries, his uncle,† Humphry Duke of Gloucester, Thomas Tiptoft Earl of Worcester, and John Whethamsted, the erudite abbot of St. Alban's, were the most zealous promoters of science: and intent upon opening fresh sources of information to the inquiring mind, spared neither pains nor expense in enriching the public libraries with new and valuable works. Lydgate, the most esteemed poet of the age, panegyrises the Duke of Gloucester's devotion to letters and condescending familiarity with learned ecclesiastics in the most glowing terms, comparing his royal patron to Julius Cæsar, who amidst the weightiest cares of state was

* Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xlix.

† Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. ii.

CHAP. IV.

not ashamed to enter the rhetorical school of Cicero at Rome. Gloucester's fame extended to distant countries; he was honoured by the esteem of all who sought to revive the drooping arts, and the most celebrated writers of France and Italy solicited and obtained his favour. Untiring in the pursuit of knowledge, and anxious to promote its best interests, had he been spared to lend his powerful assistance to the efforts made in Italy at this period for the restoration of science, England would not have relapsed into that dark night of ignorance which clouded it during so many succeeding years. The duke retained several skilful foreigners in his service, for the purpose of translating Greek authors into Latin, he acquired a magnificent collection of books by purchase, and by presents made by the superiors of monasteries, as the most effectual means of obtaining his good opinion. A few of the splendid memorials which marked the dawn of mental enfranchisement under this illustrious prince are still in existence; the greater part were destroyed by the blind fury of the reformers in the reign of Edward VI. who not staying to examine whether the illuminated manuscripts, which in the style of their decoration closely resembled monkish missals, were in reality only filled with idle legends calculated to encourage the superstition they were so desirous to extirpate, or the valuable relics of classic authors, abandoned them to the general doom.

Lydgate a monk of Bury, the master spirit of poetry in the reign of Henry VI. sang in strains far surpassing the feeble lays of Occleve, with whom he was nearly contemporary, and was no unworthy successor of Chaucer and of Gower; his fruitful pen

embraced a boundless variety of subjects, and ranging with equal felicity, from "grave to gay, from lively to severe," distinguished all his various compositions with some peculiar beauty: possessing vast command of thought and language, his images, of which many approach to the sublime, are expressed with much fluency and clearness, they follow each other with the flowing rapidity which marks the inspiration of genius; and although he falls short of the energy and pathos of his tuneful predecessor, he nearly equals him in the magnificence of his descriptions. The poet's delineations of allegorical personages are exceedingly spirited and striking, nor is he less skilful in depicting human crimes and human wretchedness; touched by his magic wand a monstrous image of Fortune starts up, with eyes like stars, dispensing with her hundred hands, flowers of summer's brightest prime, and ebon chalices of tears. Again adjured by the same wizard spell, a pale spectre glides along, her hair dishevelled, her drapery torn and disarrayed, and nothing regal left her, save her grief—the shade of Queen Brunhilda, whose tragic story is very dramatically told. In celebrating the power, the glory, the love, and mercy of the Deity, Lydgate soars with his subject to a style of grandeur which has seldom been surpassed, nor is he less felicitous in his diction when descending to earthly things; his landscapes glow with sunshine, his castles arise in gothic splendour, his knights are the mirrors of courtesy, and his heroines, whether in their triumph or in their distress, are invested with charms and feelings truly feminine. Shining alike in the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque, Lydgate also possessed no inconsi-

CHAP. IV.

derable portion of wit; a ballad describing the adventures which befel a rustic tempted to leave his native fields to roam about the metropolis, is replete with humour, and presents a lively illustration of the manners and fashions of the age: indeed the whole of the writer's voluminous works are valuable for the pictures which they afford of the habits, modes, tastes, and feelings of his own times. In his translation of the Boke of Troye, he introduces all the favourite accompaniments of the middle ages, his canvas is filled with feudal personages and feudal incidents; the classic heroes of antiquity appear in the garb of knighthood, and this pomp of chivalry is enriched with the splendid fictions derived from the wild and wondrous legends of the east.

In Lydgate's praise it must be said, that even the polite and gallant Antony Wydeville Earl Rivers was surpassed in the tenderness of his regard for the female character by this courteous monk. The errant knight was content to omit in his translation of the Dictes of the Philosophers, his author's satirical remarks upon women; but Lydgate, while also refusing to spread the slanderous aspersions of Colonna in a new language, becomes the champion of the injured sex, and praises, as befits an ecclesiastic bound by holy vows to view their outward charms and graces with a stoic's eye, their purity, fortitude, and piety, and brings forward to prove the justice of his eulogium, examples drawn from histories universally accredited. The general licentiousness ascribed by their libeller, to women, is triumphantly refuted by the glorious martyrdom of the eleven thousand virgins of Cologne, a tale devoutly believed, and

tending to promote the respect and veneration for female virtue which formed one of the distinguishing features of that beautiful moral code, which sprang up in the rudest days of gothic barbarism, and though but too often derided or neglected, imposed a wholesome restraint upon the headstrong passions of men, who regarded no other laws save those of honour.

Lydgate took the vows of a Benedictine order of monks, and entered upon his academical career at Oxford: he improved his mind by travel into France and Italy, the lands of song, drawing his inspiration from the fountain head of poesy. He read the works of Dante, Bocaccio, and Alain Chartier, in their original languages, but was no servile copyist of the masters whom he studied with so much advantage. Returning to his native country deeply versed in foreign literature, he was speedily celebrated for his learning, and his monastery became the resort of all those persons whose ideas soaring above a hawk or a hound, or a Damascus blade, were desirous of acquiring polite knowledge. Lydgate professed to teach philology, and added to his accomplishments as a poet those of a rhetorician, a geometrician, an astronomer, and a theologian.*

Besides Lydgate's three principal works, the Fall of Princes, the Seige of Thebes, and the Destruction of Troy, he wrote the Lyfe of our Lady, of which there is a version printed by Caxton. The Dance of Death. A series of poems in honour of St. Edmund, the patron of his own monastery at Bury, which with its beautiful illuminations is pre-

* Warton's History of Poetry.

CHAP. IV.

served in the British Museum. A translation of the legendary history of another saint, from the Latin, undertaken at the desire of the liberal Whethamstede, the Abbot of St. Albans, and a poem called the Pilgrims, dedicated to Thomas Montacute Earl of Salisbury, and embellished with a portrait of the author presenting his work to his noble patron, who is represented in a suit of gilt armour, also a part of the splendid collection of manuscripts which form the treasures of the Museum library. But while not employed in these important works, Lydgate's pen was never for a moment idle; his verses were extremely popular, and in such general request that, as it is truly stated by Warton, "he was not only the poet of his monastery but of the world in general. If a disguising was intended by the company of goldsmiths, a mask before his majesty at Eltham, a May game for the sheriffs and aldermen of London, a mumming before the lord mayor, a procession of pageants from the creation for the festival of Corpus Christi, or a carol for the coronation, Lydgate was consulted and gave the poetry."

At an immeasurable distance from Lydgate followed Hugh Campeden and Thomas Chartre, to whom however their country was indebted for two metrical romances, both translated from the French, the one entitled "The Historie of Kynge Boccus and Sydracke," the other the adventures of "Sir Linfale," one of Arthur's knights, but neither rising above mediocrity in thought or diction. To this scanty catalogue can only be added a few obscure versifiers, who destitute of Lydgate's genius prepared the dull orations delivered by those senten-

tious moralists, who figuring in some clumsy pageant vexed the ears of monarchs from the corners of the streets, or who wrote unintelligible rhymes for Sotelties, or composed ribald ballads against unpopular ministers or unpopular creeds, in a style of cold and savage barbarity as coarse and disgusting as the uncouth phraseology in which they were conveyed.

Amid the cares and tumults of war the Duke of Bedford was not inattentive to the interests of literature; he employed his wealth and influence in procuring manuscripts from a country made vocal by the lays of the troubadours; but these treasures of romance and legendary lore, as well as the more classic collections made in Italy by the Earl of Worcester, were for many years confined to the learned few who dwelled apart from the busy world in academic retirement, during those fierce civil contentions which exclusively occupied the thoughts of the higher and middle classes, and rendered them so totally regardless of mental acquirements, that at the accession of Henry VII. there were knights and nobles at his court who could scarcely read.

Queen Margaret, who had early imbibed a taste for letters from her amiable and accomplished father Regnier, had more peaceable times permitted the devotion of her talents to the cause, would have promoted and encouraged the revival of the fine arts. Queen's College at Cambridge owes its foundation to this magnificent princess; but compelled to neglect and finally to abandon the work by those absorbing events which demanded all the ardour of

CHAP. IV.

her lion heart, Elizabeth Wydeville, the scarcely less unfortunate partner of Edward's throne, obtained the honour of finishing the structure.

Trials by battle were of frequent occurrence during the early part of the reign of Henry VI. Stow tells us, that on the twenty-fourth of January 1430, two men of Feversham in Kent appeared in arms before the king, within the lists at Smithfield. John Upton a notary, the appellant, charged his adversary with imagining the monarch's death upon the day of his coronation, and the accused offering to prove his innocence by single combat, they were permitted to try the ordeal, and having, says the historian, "long fought, the king took up the matter and forgave both parties." *In 1446 another and a more fatal battle took place upon the same spot. John David, the servant of an armourer named William Catur, appealed his master of treason; the accused being much beloved by his friends and neighbours fell a sacrifice to their injudicious kindness; anxious to enflame his courage they plied him with so many potent draughts of wine, that he became too much intoxicated to defend himself, and speedily sank under the more vigorous arm of his opponent. His guiltlessness of the charge imputed to him is attested by all the old chroniclers, and they rejoice over the punishment which speedily followed the crime of the false servant, who was shortly afterwards convicted of felony, and hanged at Tyburn; but Shakspeare attending more to poetical justice than to the less dramatic facts of this melancholy narrative has consigned the vanquished to utter ignominy, and made him confess the treason with his dying breath.

* Stow's Chronicle.

cording to custom, the body of the unfortunate mourer was delivered into the hands of the execu- ner, and underwent the sentence of the law upon public scaffold. CHAP. IV.

Where the accusation did not involve a capital rge, those who though defeated survived the bat, were merely deprived of their arms, and led gracefully from the lists: for the more serious nces of murder and treason a severer doom was icted, the vanquished being either dead or alive judged to be drawn from the field, and hanged or headed at the pleasure of the sovereign.

A duel between more illustrious combatants was evented by the interposition of the clergy. Thomas tz Thomas prior of Kilmaine, appealed Sir James tler Earl of Ormond of treason, a day was as- ned for the battle, and the lists prepared in Smith- ld; but the representations of several learned clesiastics induced Henry to revoke his permission, d to take the quarrel into his own hands.

The incapacity of the government of Henry VI. as manifested by the continual occurrence of public surrections and private brawls. The murder of e Bishop of Salisbury was perpetrated by his own nants at Eddington in Wiltshire, in 1450. The -fated prelate, while engaged in celebrating mass, as dragged from the high altar arrayed in pon- fical vestments, and most inhumanly slaughtered y his furious assailants,* who stripping the mangled rse of its blood-stained shirt, tore it in pieces, each rrying a portion away as a trophy of the brutal eed. Having thus ruthlessly deprived their pastor

* Stow.

CHAP. IV.

of life, the assassins gratified their avarice in the plunder of his mansion, and are said to have carried away no less a sum than ten thousand marks. The bishop's mutilated corse was afterwards deposited in the parish church of Eddington, "without a stone to mark the spot."* Adam Moleyns Bishop of Gloucester, who had retired from the cabinet in the hope of avoiding the storm which he saw gathering against Suffolk and his colleagues, shared the same fate from the hands of the infuriated populace at Portsmouth, whence with the avowed intention of performing a pilgrimage, he was endeavouring to escape to some more secure asylum upon the continent. Literature lost another patron in the learned prelate so inhumanly sacrificed to popular hatred.

The laws weakly enforced were resisted by all classes, and so widely was the spirit of insubordination disseminated, that even the clergy encouraged disobedience to the civil authorities by their haughty defiance of the magistracy. †In 1452, upon St. Bartholomew's day, the mayor and sheriffs of London according to ancient custom presided at a wrestling match at a place appointed for the exercise near Moorfields, it being their duty to distribute the prizes to the victors. The Prior of St. John's monastery was also present, and a servant belonging to this turbulent ecclesiastic, not brooking, says the historian "the disgrace to be foiled before his master," insisted, against the laws of the sport, to be permitted a second trial. A quarrel ensued between the disputants, and from eager remonstrances they proceeded to fight in earnest. The mayor, after vainly

* Britton. † Daniell's Histories.

endeavouring to preserve the peace by gentle means, pursued more vigorous measures, and perceiving that the prior abetted the insolence of his follower, ordered one of the sheriffs to take the offender into custody: his comrades instantly attempted a rescue, and the mayor and his party were obliged to rush to the assistance of the sheriffs. During the struggle, the prior hastened to St. John's, and dispatched from thence and its neighbourhood in Clerkenwell, a troop of bowmen, under the guidance of a ruffian, who is described as "a desperate swaggerer," against the mayor, and this reinforcement we are told occasioned "great bloodshed and some slaughter." The life of Sir John Norman, London's gallant chief magistrate, was in imminent danger from an arrow which pierced his cap; but with the aid of the bystanders he valiantly maintained the field, and having succeeded in capturing the ringleaders, he sent them under safe custody to Newgate, and then retiring calmly to his pavilion commanded that the sports should be renewed. But many of the combatants were severely injured, and others too much out of breath to pursue the exercise, yet though his presence was now unnecessary the victor refused to quit the scene of the outrage, observing to his companions, that he would remain in order to make trial of the attachment of the citizens towards him, since they had now an opportunity of evincing either their affection or their indifference. The suspense of the mayor was not of long duration, for the instant that a rumour of his jeopardy was spread abroad, the burgesses assembled in vast numbers, and with banners displayed marched to the field and

CHAP. IV.

conveyed him home in triumph. "Upon the neck of this tumult," observes the historian, "began the quarrel in Holborn betwixt the gentlemen of the Inns of Chancery and some citizens, in appeasing of which the queen's attorney and three more were slain."*

The affray occasioned by a person named Harbottle, belonging to Clifford's Inn, began in the night, and lasted until the following day with great fury and fierceness on both sides. The mayor and the sheriffs alarmed by the report of the riot, hastened to the scene of action with a strong force to restore the peace, and succeeded in quelling a disturbance which, says our author, "by party-making was likely to have drawn in the greatest portion of the city, vast numbers flocking to the aid of their friends on either side."† The manuscript chronicle of London in recording the circumstance, states that the law students were driven by archers from the standard in Fleet-street into their inns. William Tailor, alderman of the ward, apparently one of the ringleaders, and several others were taken into custody and imprisoned in Windsor Castle. Another, but a less fatal tumult occurred at the election of the lord mayor. The popular candidate being unsuccessful, the assembly manifested their discontent by loud murmurings and threats. The spirit and promptitude of the chief magistrate fortunately prevented serious consequences from this ebullition of feeling. He commanded the sheriffs to apprehend some of the most clamorous and furious, and his orders being instantly executed, twelve or sixteen of the muti-

* Daniell. † Harleian Coll. 565.

years were lodged in Newgate, and punished for their disorderly conduct by fine and imprisonment.

In 1455 the city of London again became a scene of bloodshed and disorder, in consequence of the revengeful spirit of a young English merchant, who refused to tolerate in a stranger a privilege which he had been denied in foreign countries; but the story though involving much of cruelty and barbarism, is made so entertaining by Hall's relation, that it must be given in his own words. "A young marchaunt whiche before tyme had been in diuerse citees within the countrey of Italy, and there prohibited by the magistrates and rulers, to vse or weare any weapon inuasiue or defensiue, chalenged an Italian in Cheapside, for wearyng of a dagger, confutyng hym with the lawes of his owne country, whiche, like a colericke knave and presompteous persone, so disdainfully and with such tauntes and checkes, aunswered the merchaunt, that he, not willing to suffre so open a reproache in so publicke a streete, and that of so proud a villain, toke by force from him his dagger, and with the same a little cut his crowne and crackel his pate. This Italian in greate hast, complained to the mayor of this offence, whiche at the nexte courte, holden at the Guyldhaule, by the consente of the whole senate, sent for the offender, and declaryng to hym his crime, commaunded hym to ward, whereof diuerse other light marchauntes within the citee, sore abhorryng the Italian nacion for lickyng the fat from their beardes, and taking from them their accustomed liuyng, by reason that the said estrangers imported and transported, into and oute of this realme, all suche merchandizes and

CHAP. IV.

commodities, and necessaries, as henglishmen onely war accustomed to do, assembled together in greate plumpes, and by force compelled the maire to deliuer the prisoner out of Newgate; and yet this multitude with this doyng, nothing saciate nor appeased, like madde persons and frantique fooles ranne to the seuerall houses of diuerce Venecians, Lucases, and Florentynes, and theim spoyled, robbed and riffled, without reason or measure. The Maire perceivyng this greate enormity assembled a greate number of substanciell and grave citizens, which, not without greate bloodshed and maymyng of sundery persons, finally appeased their rage, and caused the people to depart to their houses.

"The beginner of this temerarious commocion and sodain vprore, either persuaded by his frendes or fearyng his chaunce, whiche for his first facte might sodainly insue, departed to Westminster and there registered himself as a sanctuary man. The queen, which ruled all thynges, hearyng of this greate riot and unlawfull misdemeanour, sent the Dukes of Exeter and Buckyngham, accompanied with many other noblemen to London, with a commission of oyer and determiner for the punishement of this outragious defence and sedicious crime. When the maire of the citee, the two dukes, and the two chief iustices wer set in the Guyldehaule for the performance of their commissions and began to call the empanelles, for the enquiry, as the vse and order is, diuerse light-witted and lesse-brained persones of the citee priuely armed themselves, and by ringing of Bow bel thought to assemble together a great multitude of their mind and opinion, and so

CHAP. IV.

by force and might to take from the kepers all such prisoners as were before apprehended for the late-committed robbery and riot, as they were goyng to their trial or arreignment. But this greate tumult and sodain fury was, by discrete and sage citizens, a litle and litle appeased and finally quenched; but in the meane season, the dukes and other commissioners, being vntrewly aduertized that they were in ieopardy of their lifes, sodaynly departed from the Guyldhaule and left their enquiry for that day. The mayre the next day perceiuing how the grudge rose, called a common counsail, wherof the number was I c iiij score and od persones, and by auctoritie of the same ordeyned that all wardeins of misteries should assemble their felowship in their particuler hawles, where they should exhort them to the observacion of the kynge's peace, and kepyng of good order within the citie; and if they espied any man either prone or redy to reyse a rumor, or desirous of the delyueraunce of suche as were accused and in captive custodie, that their names should be secretly written and couertly deliuered to the lorde mayor; which pollitique doyng finally ended the outragious doing of the insolent people, after which appeasing, the commissioners returned to Guyldhaule, where many of the robbers were attainted, and after condignly put to execution, besyde diuers great fynes and ransomes payd, which were set vpon many merchauntes for winkyng at these doyngs or assenting to the same." Stow, in relating the same story, informs us that three persons were hanged at Tyburn for robbing the house of a Lombard, two of whom

CHAP. IV.

were sanctuary men, registered at St. Martin's-le-Grand, the third "a shipman."

The female part of the community were not, in this turbulent period, tamely quiescent when the sex sustained neglect, injury or insult, but arrogated to themselves the right of redressing the wrongs of the sufferer or, if that were impracticable, of remonstrating with the offender in whatsoever station of power or dignity he might be. Accordingly we hear that in the parliament held in 1428, when the ardour of the Duke of Gloucester's passion for the Duchess of Brabant having cooled, he left her unaided to struggle with fierce and potent enemies, "There was one Mistress Stokes, with divers other stout women of London, of good reckoning, well apparelled, came openly to the upper parliament and delivered letters to the Duke of Gloucester, and to the archbishop, and to the other lords, containing matter of rebuke and sharp reprehension of the Duke of Gloucester, because he would not deliver his wife Jacqueline out of her grievous imprisonment, being held prisoner by the Duke of Burgundy, suffering her there to remain so unkindly: and for his publicly keeping by him another adultress, contrary to the law of God and the honourable state of matrimony. But what good success," continues the historian, "their labours took my author reporteth not."*

A more terrible example of feminine vengeance occurred in 1431. The summary and fearful punishment of a deed of base ingratitude inflicted by the

* Stow.

amazons of Whitechapel is recorded by Fabian and Holinshed; the offender was a Breton, who being reduced to poverty and distress, had received much kindness from a charitable woman of the parish, who we are told by the former writer, afforded him an asylum beneath her own roof, from the most compassionate motives. The heartless wretch, tempted by the property which the house contained, murdered his benefactress in her bed and carried off the spoil. Swift retribution followed the crime, the miscreant was closely pursued, and dragged with his ill-gotten wealth from a church wherein he had taken refuge. In the interim the atrocious act of which he had been guilty was blazoned abroad, and the women of the parish aware of the extent of his aggression, forgot all the softer feelings of their sex in the stern ardour of their justice, and rushing upon him with the fury of she-wolves, as he passed through Aldgate, on his way to prison, notwithstanding the resistance of the constables, "they so bethwachked him," says Holinshed, "with stones, stakes, kennel doong, and other things, that they laid him a stretching and rid him of life."

Though nothing can excuse the horrid thirst for blood evinced by these female fiends, the conduct of the male part of the creation towards the weaker sex frequently merited punishment, equally relentless and sanguinary. The unfortunate possessors of beauty or of gold sustained the most flagrant outrages from the avarice and the more brutal passions of men, who set the slight protection of laws, irregularly administered, at defiance, when tempted to possess themselves by force of the persons and

CHAP. IV.

estates of wealthy heiresses, or richly jointured widows. The latter were frequently obliged, against their inclination, to accept a second husband, in order to avoid the danger of a more cruel fate, to which their property exposed them; and though an act was passed in the reign of Henry VI. which rendered the constraint too often employed to compel a reluctant hand in marriage a capital offence, it was frequently committed. The Parliament Rolls of this period contain numerous relations of the most heartless and savage barbarity perpetrated upon defenceless women, by those who are wont to style themselves their protectors, and it was doubtless the constant recurrence of similar deeds, which in former times occasioned the institution of chivalry, and the obligation of the knightly oath, so often violated, to revere feminine chastity, and to right feminine wrongs: the sole defence of the weak against the strong under the feudal system, which, reared by the savage conquerors of the north, permitted the rich and great to tyrannize over their fellow creatures with impunity. Nothing in this state of affairs could have been imagined more beautiful or more appropriate than a code of laws which appealed to all the finest feelings of the mind, and rendered honour the sole arbiter and judge in every action of life; society could scarcely have existed without it during a period of such universal licentiousness, and where it obtained the influence due to its merits it produced the most exalted characters upon record; but although the history of the middle ages afford numberless instances of the noblest actions resulting from this exquisite social compact, and

ough it most assuredly softened and refined the
ners, yet the duties imposed were frequently
rely disregarded by men who were suffered un-
oved to disgrace the order of knighthood, by
ls completely at variance with its most sacred
gements. Undaunted bravery and military
nts in the field often constituted the sole pre-
ions of those nobles, whose claims to the golden
s were never called in question, and its inade-
cy to produce the desired end became so gla-
ly apparent, that as mental illumination ex-
led its light over the world, and the legislative
orities became strengthened and supported, the
le gorgeous fabric melted away, leaving scarcely
estige of its grace and grandeur behind. Chi-
y is now only a name, and while we rejoice that
rigid administration of the laws render its inter-
nce almost unnecessary, we cannot but regret
so little of its spirit should remain to incite the
ng and ardent to generous actions.

Religion assumed a gloomy aspect under the
use of Lancaster. Henry IV. repressed the early
rts of the reformers through policy to prop his
ective title with the papal power; his son espoused
cause from purer motives and, though his piety
enerated into bigotry, acted from an earnest de-
to advance the best interests of religion.
nry VI. priest-ridden from his youth, was the
e of superstition, and notwithstanding the aver-
which his mild spirit entertained to every spe-
of persecution, under his government the fires
Smithfield burned more fiercely than ever. Equally
eterate as their predecessors against the creed of

CHAP. IV.

Wickliffe, there were no bright luminaries in the Church during Henry's reign, to shed lustre upon the faith which they professed; and though many prelates publicly lamented the general corruption of manners which pervaded the whole mass of the clergy, and strove feebly yet sincerely to effect a reformation in the lives of men whose dissolute conduct disgraced their holy office, they were miserably negligent of the means whereby so desirable an object might have been attained. Persons grossly ignorant or openly irreverend were admitted into the priesthood, and while fiercely defending their privileges, and upholding with obstinate tenacity the pretended infallibility of their erring synods and councils, they exposed the monstrous system of fraud and folly which deformed those pure doctrines preached by the apostolic church. Blind to the true interests of the establishment, the prelacy disdained to alter or amend a single abuse which troubled the souls of conscientious persons; had they gradually and temperately purified their creed from its cumbrous traditions and superstitious rites, and preferred the light of the Gospel to the dark clouds of prejudice, it would have stood firm against all the efforts of its enemies; but they despised their opponents, scorned the lesson which they taught, and exerted the inordinate power which they had usurped to crush and to destroy them. It was not from the rich and the great, who might have viewed their possessions with envious and their dignities with jealous eyes, that the Roman Catholic prelacy sustained attack; the unequal combat was waged by a few humble but enlightened priests, who chose to

obey the commands of the scriptures rather than the decrees of the pope, and persons in the lower ranks of life anxious to be released from the idolatrous worship of saints and images; men who above all others would have defended a more spotless church, since it was the only path to preferment which the low-born could hope to tread; its highest dignities being in the most arbitrary period of aristocratic intolerance open to the meanest aspirant, whose ambition was flattered by the prospect of ruling by his fiat the destinies of empires and of kings. Yet notwithstanding these glittering attractions; though every other avenue to distinction was jealously barred by those who boasted noble birth, and even the long wars had failed to raise the most adventurous soldier to rank and honours, hostility to the corruptions of the church originated in the lower classes. Sir John Oldcastle's devotion to Lollardism formed a rare and dazzling exception; his fellow martyrs were poor and of small account. After the death of John of Ghent no other prince or noble was found to advocate the cause of religious liberty, and the triumphant hierarchy revelling at ease and permitting every species of abuse, continued to burn and to persecute until it awoke the cupidity of a tyrant, who found a fair pretext in the shameless immorality of the priesthood to spoil them of their extensive possessions, and received unlimited support in every despotic act from the party whom they had so long and so cruelly oppressed.

Nothing can be more frightful than the ecclesiastical history of these times; early in Henry's

CHAP. IV.

reign six persons perished at the stake in defence of their religious opinions, and numbers who were constrained by the terror of an inhuman death, to submit to the authority claimed by the spiritual lords, were subjected to inquisitorial examination, torturing penances, and severe imprisonment.* Goaded to desperation by the unyielding hostility of the church, a few fierce spirits entertained the wild project of wresting by force the freedom which was denied to entreaty. Tumultuous assemblies of heretics arose in different places, and the Duke of Gloucester while protector, was compelled to ride to Abingdon in person to quell an insurrection headed by William Maundeville a weaver, baillie of that town, who boldly avowed his hostility to the ecclesiastical government, declaring, as Fabian informs us, that he would have "made priests' heads as cheap as sheep's heads, three a penny, or ten according to some writers."

The Lollards most assuredly injured the cause by their fanaticism, but their enemies made no distinction between the rational and moderate desires of enlightened minds and the extravagant demands of phrensied bigots, treating all who presumed to dissent from their creed with equal severity. Reginald Peacocke Bishop of Chichester, who by venturing to doubt the necessity of believing in the infallibility of the church and other disputed points, embroiled himself with his intolerant brethren, was cited to appear before the primate to answer to the charge of heresy brought against him; and although he acknowledged

* Fox.

nd recanted his errors, he only purchased life by the CHAP. IV.
ucession, and lingered out the remainder of his
ays in solitary imprisonment.

During the civil wars the public mind was diverted
om religious controversy, and the dispirited Lol-
rds made no advantage of the unsettled state of the
overnment to promulgate their opinions; and as all
anges in the dynasty tended to increase the power
nd the influence of the clergy, the house of York
ke that of Lancaster, fearing to offend so formida-
le a body, multiplied their privileges and immuni-
es, and gave them even more unlimited controul
ver the lives of their opponents than they had
itherto possessed.

But while the ecclesiastical body clamorously as-
erted the absolute authority of the Pope, they were
ot equally active in the payment of those taxes
hich the See of Rome claimed the right of imposing
n the priesthood of every country under its domi-
ion. Apprehensive that some difficulty might occur
n collecting a large sum of money levied at his own
iscretion, Pope Eugenius was induced by the devo-
ion which Henry VI. manifested to the church, to
resent him with one of those cheap baubles so ac-
eptable to minds reduced by superstition to a state
f imbecility, a consecrated golden rose; whose mys-
ical meaning was explained, whose virtues were
anded, and whose inestimable value was ostenta-
iously set forth in a bull which accompanied it, and
n which the king was exhorted to unite with other
Christian princes against the triumphant arms of the
Turkish infidels, and to exert his influence over the

CHAP. IV.

clergy to prevail upon them to submit cheerfully to the new burthens which his exigencies obliged him to impose.* The Archbishop of Canterbury who likewise filled the high office of Chancellor of England, lavished all his eloquence in extolling the beauties and virtues of the rose, speaking briefly upon the less agreeable subject of the tax, which he peremptorily suspended, alleging as a reason the necessity of some farther consultations with the pope, by persons whom the king intended to dispatch to Rome for the purpose, and Henry being still less able than any of the other Christian powers to make any attempt to humble the pride of the crescent, the Greek empire was crushed by the victorious moslem, and Mahomet II. planted his proud banner upon the walls of Constantinople.

The fierce domestic strife which in the deadly contests of the houses of York and Lancaster rendered England one wide battle field, was, according to the old chronicles, ushered in by portents and prodigies of strange and fearful solemnity; and whether these extraordinary occurrences were merely the invention of persons delighting in wild fancies, or arose from simple and natural causes, magnified into marvels by credulous minds, they shew that the darkest superstition still prevailed throughout the realm. The ominous events which are stated to have taken place in the early part of the reign of Henry VI., present only a few casualties, which though not common do not partake of the supernatural; but when the kingdom was threatened by civil war, and

* Stow.

when the disastrous consequences of the struggle for the crown had placed the Lancastrian party upon the brink of ruin, the prognostics of calamity assumed a more awful appearance, and men were taught to augur evil to the reigning family from miracles replete with horror. In the fifth year of Henry's accession to the throne, we are told that the weather was so unseasonable that it rained with little cessation from Easter until Michaelmas. In the seventeenth year the failure of the harvest obliged the people to appease the cravings of hunger with food obtained from the fern root. In the following year all the lions in the tower died, and the porter's gate of the city of London sank in the space of one night to the depth of seven feet in the earth. In 1436 a very deep river in Bedfordshire is said to have suddenly suspended its course, parting its waters in the centre and leaving its bed dry for a distance of three miles, "which wonder," continues Baker, "many thought to signify the division of the people and falling away from the king which happened shortly after." And in 1447, in addition to a blazing star which lighted the heavens with fiery splendour, there happened a more appalling sight, a monstrous bird emerged from the sea at Portland, in the presence of a vast number of persons, and clapping his wings and crowing hideously three times, turned with menacing gestures to the north, the south, and the west, before he vanished from the spectators' affrighted gaze. Many prodigious births, we are also informed, occurred about this time; and three years afterwards a shower of blood is reported to have fallen from the sky in

CHAP. IV.

Bedfordshire, dying with sanguine drops the linen spread out upon the fields to dry, a terrific portent presaging the revival of those dreadful scenes of slaughter which had strewed the earth with countless victims, and made the rivers to run crimson with human gore.*

* Fabian. Stow. Hall. Baker.

CHAPTER V.

Edward's Government—his Attention to Commerce—Negociations with foreign Powers—Warlike Feeling of the Nation—new Method of raising Money—Edward's Fascination—Anecdote of a rich Widow—Alliance with Burgundy—Preparations against France—Strength of Edward's Army—the King claims the Crown of France—Politic Conduct of Louis—the Herald's Advice—Errors of Burgundy and the Constable—distrust of the former—Indignation of the English Army—their Discomfiture before St. Quentin—Burgundy's Departure—Edward's Courtesy to a Prisoner—Message of the Nobles—Suspicions of Louis—A counterfeit Herald—Interview with Edward's Nobles—The King enters into a Negociation—Morton one of the Commissioners—his Fidelity—Demands of the English—Preliminaries settled—Incredulity of the French Nobles—Anecdote of Louis—Burgundy's Anxiety—his Disappointment and Anger—Favours granted by Louis to the English Soldiers—their hospitable Reception—their Excesses—Meeting between Louis and Edward—their Conversation—Edward's generous Defence of the Duke of Bretagne—sumptuous Gifts of Louis—Flattery of the Courtiers—Indignation of a Gascon—Anxiety of Louis—Edward's peremptory Refusal to aid the King's Designs on Bretagne—Embarrassment of Louis—Edward's Reception in London—Contempt of his Contemporaries—Murmurs of the People—Rigorous Enforcement of the Law—The Earl of Richmond in Jeopardy—his narrow Escape—obstinate Attachment of the Lancastrian.

EDWARD had now witnessed the downfal of all his enemies, and securely seated upon the English throne, reigned without a rival: he drew around

CHAP. V.
1474.

CHAP. V. him a brilliant circle of nobility, chiefly of his own creation, lavishing honours upon the queen's relations and his own peculiar favourites; free from the dread of an overbearing aristocracy whose gigantic power for the present he had crushed; but family dissentions embittered even these peaceful days. It was impossible for the king to satisfy the insatiate rapacity of his brothers; Clarence anxious to retain the whole of the Earl of Warwick's immense estates, had obtained the custody of the co-heiress, whom he was desirous to seclude from the world. Gloucester regardless of his kinsman's interests, in seeking to enrich himself by marriage, directed his attention to the Lady Anne. Bent upon preventing an alliance so prejudicial to his own designs, Clarence obliged his sister-in-law to assume the attire of a menial, and under the homely garb of a cook maid strove to conceal the lady from her adventurous suitor; but Gloucester's avarice, if not his affection, rendered him lynx eyed, and penetrating the disguise he became a successful wooer, carried off his prize, and placed her for effectual security in the sanctuary of St. Martin's-le-Grand.* A violent quarrel between the brothers ensued, and Edward interposing, Clarence unhesitatingly avowed the cause of his opposition, declaring that "Gloucester might marry the lady, his sister-in-law, but they would part no livelihood."† The gold enamoured bridegroom was not to be deterred from the accomplishment of his purpose, he made frequent appeals to the king, and several councils were called to appease the differences

* History of Croyla. † Fenn's Collection, vol. ii. 93.

and settle the disputes between these coveteous Cl
relations. By Sir John Paston's account, the friends
of both parties were ready to draw their swords in
this unhappy quarrel. "The world," he observes,
"looks queasy here. For the most part that be
about the king have sent hither for their harness,"
and then he proceeds to state that the warlike pre-
parations of Clarence had occasioned serious unea-
siness to Edward, who was determined to put an
end to the feud by force, if gentle means were
unavailing.

At length the contending brothers submitted to
discuss their respective pretensions in a more ami-
cable manner, and to abide by the decrees of arbi-
trators appointed for the purpose of deciding this
important cause. The lady was still living whose
right was superior to that of either of the claimants,
he Countess of Warwick; she had brought all the
ich possessions of the Beauchamps into her hus-
nd's family, as heiress of the great Duke of
'arwick, but sharing in Richard Nevill's attainder,
r claim was formally set aside.

After frequent deliberations a certain portion of
king-maker's property was awarded to his young-
daughter, Lady Anne, whilst the elder, Isabella,
:eeded to all the rest: the decision was ratified
arliament, but however just and equitable, it
far from being satisfactory to the haughty dis-
its, and a secret hatred grew up in the hearts
:n, who though outwardly professing friend-
could never forgive the disappointment of
:xpectations of personal aggrandizement. A
circumstance broke the fraternal bond be-

CHAP. V. tween John of Ghent and Thomas of Woodstock, and as in the present instance, affection grew so cold that the more fortunate of the two beheld with careless indifference, the disgrace and death of his brother.

Relieved for the present from the evils menaced by this unfortunate quarrel, Edward rushed with avidity into all the pleasures devised by a luxurious court. Attached to field sports he invested the chace with new delights, carrying with him into the wildest depths of the forest a splendid retinue of noble beauties, for whose accommodation silken pavilions were erected upon the green sward, and the banquet prepared for the gallant train of hunters, who with their voluptuous monarch after ranging through the dark woods, made blythe with ringing hoof and horn, quitted their hawks and hounds to end their festal day with wine and minstrelsy, a scene of picturesque and joyous revelry beautifully contrasted with the fields of carnage which the weary pen has been so often tasked to describe.*

The queen, not it appears "easily jealous," looked on with an unjaundiced eye at the royal philanderer's seductive amusements. Content with her elevation and anxious to secure the influence of her family, Elizabeth carefully avoided all subjects of dispute with a self-willed and licentious husband, thus displaying the prudence of the politician rather than the affectionate tenderness of an anxious wife.

The dissipation which engrossed a large portion of Edward's time did not render him inattentive to the welfare of the kingdom, either as it regarded its in-

* Comines.

ternal or foreign policy. Anxious for the encouragement and protection of commerce, Edward adjusted all the disputes which had arisen between him and the Hans towns: even in the most insecure and turbulent period of his reign he had studied the interests of society in providing for the security of English merchants: out of fifteen statutes which were passed in his third year, thirteen were directed to this praiseworthy object, and he recurred to the same system the moment he was firmly re-established on his throne. The king also confirmed the truce with Scotland, which had been prolonged from the original term to fifty years, kept up his friendly intercourse with Denmark and Portugal, and entered into new treaties with the Dukes of Bretagne and Burgundy.* Thus strengthened abroad and free from all apprehension from domestic enemies, the eyes of the nation anxiously turned upon France. Edward's brilliant military career inspired a hope hat the continental possessions, so gloriously won nd so disgracefully lost, might be regained by the rtunate arms of a warrior who had fought his ood-stained way to the English crown; and the narch though sunk in debasing pleasures did not em it prudent to disappoint the general expecta-. The treasury, never in a very flourishing con-n, although lately enriched by extensive grants, very inadequate to the undertaking; "and the ," says Holinshed,† "because he wanted money, could not well charge hys comons with a newe die, for that he had received the laste yeare sums of money granted to him by parliament,

* Rymer's Fœd. † Vol. ii. p. 1346.

CHAP. V. he devised this shift, to call before him a great number of the wealthiest sort of people in his realme, and to them declared his neede, and the requisite causes thereof, he demanded of every of them some portion of money, which they sticked not to give, and therefore the king willing to shew them this their liberality was very acceptable to him, he called this grant of money 'a benevolence,' notwithstanding that many with grudge gave great summes toward that new found ayde, which of them might be called a malevolence, but the king used suche gentle fashions toward them, with friendly prayer of their assistance in his necessitie, that they could not otherwyse doe but frankly and freely yeilde and give him a reasonable and competent summe."

Edward's conciliating manners carried a measure which might have been dangerous to the popularity of a less gracious monarch; his extraordinary beauty, which on his accession had called forth a compliment from the Speaker of the House of Commons,* likewise interested many of his subjects in his favour. An amusing anecdote is preserved by Hall, which gives a lively illustration of the person and demeanour of a prince, whose graceful fascinations masked a cold, a callous, and a relentless heart. Summoning a rich widow before him, the king asked her what sum she would willingly give in support of his great expenses. The woman, a portly dame well stricken in years, gazing on the handsome monarch with undisguised pleasure, exclaimed, 'By my troth for thy lovely countenance

* "The beaute of personage that it hath pleased Almighty God to send you."—*Parliament Rolls*, vol. v.

thou shalt even have twenty pounds.' The royal applicant charmed with this honest effusion of sentiment, and the equally unlooked-for gift which accompanied it, thanked the bounteous donor with a kiss: and overjoyed by her sovereign's unexpected courtesy, the good woman instantly doubled the amount of her contribution. CHAP. V.

The historian of Croyland in relating the wonderful success of this expedient, observes that "By this means greater sums of money were collected than had ever been seen before, or will ever be seen hereafter." This monk, adds Dr. Henry, did not possess the gift of prophecy.

The Duke of Burgundy had engaged to co-operate with England in the war. Bretagne was at open enmity with Louis; and the Earl of St. Paul, Constable of France, earnestly invited the approach of an invading army, promising to second it with other great lords against a king who had lost the hearts of his nobility.

The assistance afforded by the French court to the Lancastrian party had excited Edward's vindictive ire. No other foreign enterprize could have roused the voluptuous monarch from a life of slothful ease; but though indifferent to glory he exulted in the prospect of success which opened on an enterprize wherein conquest would be united with revenge.

The preparations of Edward were exceedingly superb, occupying upwards of a year in their completion. Fifteen hundred nobles and gentlemen, the flower of the English chivalry, on horseback, richly trapped and armed after the splendid manner of the

* Hall.

CHAP. V.

time, each having several followers, also equipped with horses, attended upon the king.* There were likewise fifteen thousand mounted archers, a strong body of infantry and a train of artillery, and in the whole array there was not a single page or other useless person.† The Duke of Burgundy sent five hundred flat-bottomed boats from Holland to expedite the passage of the troops; yet, notwithstanding this supply of convenient craft, in addition to their own vessels, they were three weeks in getting across the sea to Calais; and had Louis possessed an efficient navy he might have prevented or at least delayed the invasion.

1475. June 20.

Previous to his embarkation, which took place at Sandwich, Edward dispatched a herald, according to the custom of the age, with a defiance to the French king, demanding the immediate surrender of the crown as the English monarch's rightful inheritance. Louis, aware of the difficulties of his situation, and always choosing to negociate rather than to fight, dissembled his fears and his indignation; and having read the letter without communicating its contents to the circle who stood anxiously watching his countenance,† sent for the bearer into his private closet, and artfully questioning him respecting the disposition of the king, his master, and his feelings towards the war, made him a present of "thirty ells of goodly crimson velvet," three hundred crowns, and the promise of a thousand more if the peace which he so earnestly desired should be concluded, condescending at the same time to explain the various causes which would prevent the

* Comines. † Comines.

Duke of Burgundy and the constable from fulfilling their engagements.* Garter king at arms, pleased with his reception, and eager to secure the remainder of the gold, advised the king to remain quiescent until the hostile array had crossed the sea, and then to send a herald into the English camp to solicit safe conduct for a solemn embassy who should be the bearer of letters to the Lords Howard and Stanley, men high in favour with Edward, and disposed to consult their own interests even against national honour.

The headstrong obstinacy of the Duke of Burgundy, and the constable's deep dissimulation, paved the way for a treaty which preserved France from a ruinous war. Edward upon landing was surprised and disappointed by the conduct of his expected allies. The Burgundian had involved himself in a rash quarrel with his German neighbours. Wasting both men and treasure before a paltry fortress, which he was at last compelled to relinquish with disgrace, he was not in a condition to perform the promises which had been guaranteed by successive treaties. Charles hastened to meet the King of England with a slender retinue, offered a few weak excuses for the absence of his army, and inviting the monarch to accompany him to Peronne, from some unaccountable suspicion closed the gates of the town, and obliged his friend to encamp in the open fields without the walls. Edward was offended by this symptom of distrust, and another extraordinary circumstance completed his displeasure. The duke assured the king that the constable was ready to

* Comines.

CHAP. V. deliver up the strong town of St. Quentin into his hands; and the English pleased with the prospect of such excellent quarters, marched forward, expecting, as Comines tells us, "that the bells should be rung upon their entrance, and that they should be received by the citizens with the cross and holy water;" but the treacherous commander, intent upon some new and crooked scheme of policy, shut the gates, and commanded the garrison to fire upon the advancing troops: a few of the English were killed, and some taken prisoners. Enraged by the hostility of their pretended ally, the soldiers sullenly retired through inclement weather to a camp which they would have gladly exchanged for the more comfortable shelter of walled houses; and the Duke of Burgundy, extremely disconcerted, took his leave abruptly, with vain assurances that he would speedily return at the head of new levies. A few minutes previous to the departure of the Burgundian, a servant belonging to a gentleman of the French king's household, was captured by the English and brought into the royal tent. This man being the first prisoner taken in the war, Edward, with his usual courtesy, commanded his liberation. Upon leaving the tent, the Lords Howard and Stanley called the Frenchman aside, and informed, perhaps by the herald, of the liberal intentions of Louis to those who might be inclined to enter his service, desired him to present their humble commendations to the king, his master, if it should be in his power to obtain an audience.*

Louis was at this period at Compeigne, whither

* Comines.

the servant thus curiously exalted into an ambassador instantly hastened. The jealous monarch suspecting treachery, ordered the bearer of this important message to be thrown into chains for a spy, but sending different persons to question him, was at last convinced of the truth of his intelligence, and hearing the story from his own lips, directed that his fetters should be knocked off though he still detained him in durance. Pleased with this confirmation of the friendly sentiments entertained by Edward's favourite ministers, Louis determined to send letters to these noblemen, and at a period in which all contemporary princes studiously surrounded themselves with the pomp and insignia of royalty, it is a circumstance worthy of record that the French king had not a single herald or even a trumpeter in his retinue. Never at a loss if an object could be gained by chicanery, the intriguing monarch sent to ask a servant of the Lord Halles if he would venture to assume the style and dress of an officer at arms: the risque was great in those days of ceremonious etiquette, the impostor being in danger of a disgraceful death for his usurpation of a character held sacred by the laws of chivalry. After some hesitation the man consented to undertake the part, and a coat being hastily manufactured out of a trumpet banner, and an escutcheon borrowed of a noble, the counterfeit herald repaired to the English camp, and was brought straight to the pavilion of the king. The Lords Howard and Stanley learning the ambassador's errand, gave him words of encouragement, and soon afterwards, admitted by Edward to an audience, he spoke so well on the part of his master, that the

CHAP. V. English council consented to enter into a negociation with Louis, granted him a safe conduct and honourable escort back to the French court, and presented him with four gold nobles, or according to Hall, with a gilt cup and twenty angels. The next morning the commissioners appointed by each party met at a village near Amiens to discuss the preliminaries of peace. Louis sending the bastard of Bourbon, Admiral of France, the Lord Saint Pierre, and a bishop; and Edward the Lord Howard, Sir Thomas St. Leger, and Doctor Morton, a distinguished ecclesiastic destined to act a very conspicuous part in after years, and one of the few Lancastrians whom the English monarch had received into favour. In the service of Queen Margaret, Morton like Sir John Fortescue, had remained faithful to the last extremity in defence of the red rose; but when root and branch was exterminated, accepted, or perhaps sued for pardon to the House of York. Edward, sufficiently discerning to value the priest's estimable character and extraordinary talents, admitted him to the highest degree of confidence; and grateful for the repeated marks of affection which he had received, he espoused the cause of his patron's helpless children with noble fidelity. "The English," says Comines, "after their wonted manner, first demanded the crown of France, at the least Normandy and Guienne," concessions which of course the ambassadors of Louis refused; but both parties being anxious for peace, more reasonable terms were proposed, and Edward's ministers immediately agreed to relinquish all the splendid pretensions of their master, upon the payment of a large sum of money,

Aug. 20. 1475.

and the promise of an annual pension to the crown: they likewise stipulated for the marriage of the Dauphin with the Princess Elizabeth of England, conditions which were very readily accepted.

The French nobles could scarcely credit the report of the commissioners when informed of the unwarlike temper of the invading army; they believed the treaty to be a mere pretence designed for the purpose of lulling them into a fancied security;* but Louis was better acquainted with the circumstances which led to the determination of his late enemy. The evasive conduct of the constable with whom he had successfully tampered, the apparent defection of Burgundy, and the dreary prospect of spending the approaching winter in the discomfort of a camp, he felt assured would disgust Edward with the expedition. The political system pursued by a monarch unparalleled in craft, is so well described in the following account from the pen of Philip De Comines, that any attempt to alter or abridge it would deprive the reader of a very entertaining narrative. He says: "The constable, who began to smell these practices, was stricken with sudden feare because he had offended all the three Princes. Wherefore he sent often to the king, and even at this present arrived at the court one of his gentlemen named Louis of Creville, with one of his secretaries called John Richer, who are both yet living. They delivered their message to the Lord Bouchage and me before they spake with the king, as his pleasure was they should. The news they brought liked the king well, because he meant to use them to good purpose, as

* Comines.

CHAP. V.

you shall heare. The Lord of Contay (servant to the Duke of Burgundy) lately taken prisoner before Arras, went to-and-fro upon his word between the duke and the king: and the king had promised to release him his ransom, and to give him a great summe of money if he could persuade his master to peace. By chance he returned to the king the selfe same day that these two servants of the Constable's arrived. Wherefore the king made him and me to stand in a great old presse in his chamber, to the end he might heare and make report to his master of the language the constable and his servants used of him. We being there placed, the king sate downe on a forme hard by the presse, to the end we might the better heare Louis of Creville and his companion's message, who began thus: 'that of late being by their master's commandement with the Duke of Burgundy, to persuade him to depart from the Englishmen's friendship, they found him in such a rage against the King of England, that they had almost won him not onley to abandon the Englishmen but also to helpe to spoile and destroy them in their return home. And in uttering these words (the better to please the king) the said Louis of Creville counterfeiting the Duke of Burgundy's gesture by stamping upon the ground and swearing St. George, rehearsed many reprochful speeches that (as they said) the duke used of the King of England. To be short they uttered as many scofs and mocks of the duke as was possible. The king made great sport of this matter, and bad the said Louis of Creville to speake alowd, faining himself to be growen somewhat deafe, and to tell him this tale againe, which the

ether making no bones thereat, did it with a good will. CHAP. V.

"The said Contay, who stood with me in the presse, was marvellously astonished at this talke, neither would have believed it unless himself had heard it. When the others had departed, the Lord of Contay and I came out of the presse; the king laughed marvellously, and was very merry with this pageant. But the said Contay was so far out of patience to heare such petit companions thus flout and scoffe his master, especially the constable pretending so great friendship to his master, and treating with him of so many matters, that he thought every howet ten till he were on horsebacke to advertise the Duke his master thereof." By these and similar arts Louis contrived to break asunder the most powerful confederations of his enemies.

Burgundy, upon hearing a rumour of the projected peace, hastened to the King of England to ascertain the truth of the intelligence; he came attended only by sixteen horse, and although he had suffered himself to be drawn away from the enterprize by an insane quarrel with the Emperor of Germany, he upbraided Edward with the noble actions performed by his predecessors in France, and refusing to be comprehended in the nine years' truce to which his ally had agreed, rode away in great displeasure leaving the king and his council equally incensed. The duke's indignant speech was highly applauded by those amid the nobles who desired to uphold their country's honour, and viewed with shame and regret the base price for which Edward and his favourites had bartered England's ancient

CHAP. V. possessions: but the sovereign and the ministers were dazzled by the golden shower which poured itself into their laps; and no remonstrance however just and spirited could deter them from accepting the splendid bribe. The constable, dreadfully alarmed by the measures which his own treachery had produced, sent his confessor to Edward, desiring for "God love," that he would not trust to the King of France's promises or consent to a dishonourable peace for the sake of a paltry grant, assuring him that he would put him into immediate possession of the towns of Eu and Valence and lend him fifty thousand crowns, if he stood in need of money: but the king, aware that he only desired time to make advantageous terms for himself, answered that the truce was already concluded.*

Louis, with the most minute attention to every circumstance which promised to favour his designs, studied to reconcile Edward's soldiers to the change in their prospects. The English camp had been removed to the close vicinity of Amiens, for the purpose of a more ready communication with the French government, and the gates of the town were opened freely to the troops. The licentious and disorderly state of the army rendered this privilege exceedingly dangerous: immense numbers, contrary to the custom usually observed upon such occasions, entered the town in arms, and their hostile appearance, combined with their want of common precaution, might have been very fatal in case of any treachery on the part of Louis, who

* Comines.

had the destruction of considerable bodies daily in his power. CHAP. V.

The French monarch fortunately honestly desired to make peace, and provided so handsomely for the entertainment of Edward's soldiers, that they had little reason to regret the loss of their expected conquests. Long tables covered with dainty provisions were laid out in the streets, abundance of wine flowed in every direction. "Of water," says Comines, "there was no mention." The citizens were appointed to wait upon their rude guests, and moreover the taverns were furnished at the expence of Louis, and whatever house they entered they paid nothing.

Such a reception delighted the Englishmen; at one time there were not less than nine thousand soldiers in the town, and even the king, notwithstanding his determined indulgence to all their wishes, became alarmed lest they should take up arms and possess themselves of his person: but his fears were calmed by the report of Philip de Comines, who, inspecting the city, found the strangers for the most part either drunk or asleep, or abandoned to reckless jollity, and all in situations very incompatible with any preconcerted design. Edward ashamed at length of the excesses of his troops, desired that they might be denied entrance, which Louis politicly refusing, he took the town gates into his possession, a few only were admitted, and their revels were carried on with greater regard to decency and decorum: thus the King of France got rid of his troublesome visitors without the odium of ordering their expulsion.

CHAP. V.

Both parties displayed more distrust in the interview which took place between the two monarchs; the spot appointed for the meeting was the centre of a wooden bridge, constructed for the purpose across the river; where they conversed with each other through a grating. The two armies were drawn up on the morning of this important ceremonial on different sides of the stream; that of England made a gallant show, being marshalled in order of battle, whilst Louis who disregarded all outward pomp, was only attended by eight hundred men-at-arms. The French king came first to the grate with twelve nobles in his train, and immediately after he had taken his station Edward advanced up the causeway at the head of his court; he was splendidly attired in cloth of gold, and wore the fleur-de-lys formed of rich jewels in his black velvet cap. Philip de Comines, who was present, having quitted the service of the Duke of Burgundy for that of the King of France, remarks that though still handsome increasing corpulence had somewhat deteriorated the beauty formerly so strikingly conspicuous in his person.* The Duke of Clarence, the Lord Hastings, the Earl of Northumberland, the Chancellor, and many other nobles superbly habited, accompanied the king, but Gloucester whose martial spirit panted for war, refused to sanction these inglorious negociations with his presence. Many formal salutations and various studied compliments passed between the courteous sovereigns. Edward replying

* I had seen him before much beautifuller than at the present; for sure when the Earl of Warwick chased him out of England, he was the goodliest gentleman that ever I set mine eye on.—*Philip de Comines.*

to those addressed to him in excellent French, an accomplishment not general we may suppose from the observation of Comines, and the treaty being read, both kings swore upon a cross and missal, to observe the articles mutually agreed by their respective councils. The solemnity ended, more lively conversation ensued. Louis in his anxiety to say pleasant things, unwarily asked the English monarch to visit him in Paris, giving as a motive the charms of the ladies, and jocosely assuring him that he should have the Cardinal of Bourbon for his confessor. Edward laughed, and pleased with the jovial turn which the meeting had taken, answered with his wonted frankness. Louis eager to profit by his companion's thoughtless humour, asked what course should be pursued towards the Dukes of Burgundy and Bretagne, a question of deep import to his designs upon the territory of the latter prince. The King of England replied that he would make a second offer to Burgundy to include him in the truce, which if he refused he would interfere no farther; but earnestly desired that nothing should be attempted against the Duke of Bretagne, since "in his necessity he had never found so faithful a friend." Louis promised to comply with this injunction, and taking leave with many gracious words, noticed every one of Edward's retinue with a condescending speech, a method of ingratiating himself with his inferiors which he well knew to be effectual. CHAP. V.

The King of England retired to his camp, and Louis to Amiens, whence he dispatched a sumptuous present of provisions and other articles necessary for

CHAP. V. Edward's accommodation, the obsequious purveyor not even omitting torches and tapers. He had already furnished the royal table with three hundred cart loads of wine, and now determined upon subduing the opposition of those whom his keen eye missed at the meeting, so pressingly invited the Duke of Gloucester to visit him at Amiens, that the prince, unable to resist, complied with the flattering request, and accepted silver, plate, horses, and furniture from the judicious monarch's hands. Louis, when surrounded by his own trusted friends, indulged his scorn of the sordid enemy, so easily won by the touch of Mammon; neither did he escape censure from those who despised the base means to which he had descended in the preservation of his ancestorial rights, worthy of more honourable defence by the sword.* The treaty thus bought and sold was equally disgraceful to both parties; but the anxiety to soothe the weaknesses of crowned heads, so prevalent in courts, produced a rumour to which superstition readily gave credence. The friends of the peace averred that it had been made by the Holy Spirit, "for that a white pigeon sate upon the King of England's pavilion during his interview with Louis, and would not remove thence, notwithstanding any noise made in the camp." Others, more enlightened, or less rapacious, treated the tale with contempt. One of Edward's servants, a Gascon by birth, even ventured to express his honest indignation at the king's dastardly surrender of those hopes of conquest which opened so brightly before him. Philip de Comines asked him, "How many battles the

* Comines.

English monarch had won?" He replied. "Nine." And to the question, "How many he had lost?" he answered gallantly, "But one, that of which you have bereaved him;" adding, that he sustained greater dishonour in returning home without an attempt to wreathe his brow with laurels, than he had received glory in all his former victories. Louis, informed of these generous sentiments, earnestly sought to win the speaker to his interests by the all powerful influence of flattery and gold. He was afraid that Edward's debased soul might be awakened to more lofty thoughts by the remonstrances of those around him; and in accordance with his usual method, he lavished costly favours upon the intrepid Gascon, invited him to his own table, and though he refused to quit the King of England's service for the promise of an excellent office in France, forced a present of a thousand crowns upon him, saying privately to his confidents, that he was a dangerous knave and his mouth must be stopped. Having succeeded in corrupting the king, the nobles, and the army, Louis had two objects still to gain: the immediate departure of the English and the consent of Edward to his unwarrantable projects against the Duke of Bretagne. He expedited the former by the prompt payment of the money stipulated in the late treaty; but in the latter, notwithstanding his splendid bribe, he met a grievous disappointment. Undeterred by the King of England's evident reluctance to abandon his friend, Louis dispatched two lords to his court, with instructions to employ all their influence in the accomplishment of this favourite point. The

CHAP. V. merchant of Gascoine that dwelt in England, who mission failed: a dearer interest interposed, or perhaps a faint spark of virtue still existed in Edward's contaminated heart, and flaming forth at the call of honour, he replied with generous energy, "That whosoever should make war upon the Duke of Bretagne, he would cross the sea again in his defence." This spirited effusion effectually silenced the intriguing king.*

The obsequious meanness of the Lord Howard brought Louis into an awkward dilemma. This noble, anxious to evince the excess of his dearly-purchased zeal, and imagining in his simplicity that the King of France sincerely desired to cultivate a personal intercourse with Edward, offered to bring his master to Amiens, or even to Paris, to visit him. Louis with some difficulty parried the attack without betraying his secret repugnance. Alarmed by the frank acceptance of his invitation, he had already expressed his fears of the consequences which might probably result from the protracted residence of the English monarch in France to Philip de Comines, who has preserved the wary politician's speech: "For he is, quoth he, a goodly prince, and much given to love, he may peradventure meete with some daintie dame at Paris, that will entertaine him with so many sugred words, that she may happily make him desirous to return thither againe; but his predecessors have sojourned too long

* Andrews remarks, that "if Edward's own private interests had not been concerned, he would have abandoned Bretagne to the King of France, or the Prince of Darkness, for an additional present of fifty thousand crowns.—*General Chronology.*

both in Paris and Normandy. I like not his company on this side of the sea; but so long as he keepeth home I wish to have him my good friend and loving brother."

Edward left Lord Howard and another gentleman as hostages for the performance of his engagements, and then prepared to re-embark, enriched with the treasures of Louis, and the money lavished by his own subjects upon the delusive but flattering prospect of recovering the crown of France. Though Louis did not scruple to express his contempt of the enemies whom he had so easily cajoled by flattering their vanity, pampering their appetites, and administering to their avarice, he was kept in a continual state of apprehension from the dread of revealing his private sentiments to those who might convey the bitter gibes extorted by the sordid rapacity and weak credulity of the invaders to English ears. Comines relates an anecdote which proves how anxiously he endeavoured to prevent the mischief which threatened to arise from those imprudent sallies which, notwithstanding his habitual wariness, he could not always repress. "The king," says the writer, to whose entertaining pen posterity is so deeply indebted, "feared especially above all things least some word should escape him at unawares, whereby the Englishmen might gather that he derided them. And by chance the next morning after this meeting, as he was in his closet, and not past three or fower of us with him, he spake a merrie word touching the wines and presents sent to the English campe; and as he turned about, observed a

CHAP. V. was come to moove a suit to him for a license to ship certain Gascoine wines into England without impost, which was a sute that might much benefit the said merchant if he could obtain it. The king woondered when he saw him how he was gotten in thither, and asked him of what towne he was in Guienne, and whether he were a merchant and maried in England? The merchant answered yea, but that his wealth was not great. Incontinent before his departure thence the king appointed one to accompanie him to Bordeaux, and I communed with him at his commnadement. Further, a good office in the towne where he was borne was given him; the license for the wines which he demanded was granted him; and besides this, one thousand franks were delivered him for his wive's charges upon the way, and he sent a brother of his into England for hir, but went not himselfe: thus the king imposed this penaltie upon himselfe for his over large speech."

Somewhat uneasy respecting the nature of his reception in England, Edward contrived to divert the attention of the people from the late disgraceful transaction by the splendour of a civic pageant; ten or twelve of the wealthiest commoners of London and other great cities had accompanied the king in his enterprize, and heartily tired of the unaccustomed hardships of a military life, not only consented to the treaty, but lent their aid to appease their brethren in England, and reconcile them to the failure of their high expectations.* Edward was therefore secure of the trading community. The mayor and aldermen attended by five hundred citi-

* Comines.

zens met the royal train at Blackheath, and ushered them into London amidst shouts and acclamations. The public voice is easily gained by an appeal to the senses, but when the glittering procession had passed away, the people began to reflect upon the shameful circumstances which had destroyed their eager hopes, and this discontent inflamed by the indignant speeches of many martial individuals disappointed of the soldier's most honourable reward, broke out into open murmurs. The ignominious expedition which awoke these bitter feelings was the scorn of civilized Europe, and nearly effaced all the glory formerly gained by the proud islanders in their exploits on the continent: even the English hostages, shamed into a more manly spirit by the taunts of foreigners, regretted their abject debasement to sordid gain, and almost meditated a new invasion to wipe off the stigma attached to the last.

Lord Howard and his colleague, to excuse their acquiescence in a disgraceful peace, observed to Philip de Comines, that if they had been acquainted with the strength of the Duke of Burgundy, whose ambassador came to the French court, "well accompanied by archers and men of war," they, peradventure, would not have consented to the truce; "which words," says Comines, "the Vicount of Narbonne hearing said, 'Were you so simple to think that the Duke of Burgundy had not great force of such men? he had sent them only to refresh themselves:* but you were so desirous to return home, that six hundred pipes of wine, and a pension the king giveth you, blewe you quickly back

* Comines.

CHAP. V. to England.' The Englishmen in a great furie answered: 'I perceive now their sayings to prove true, that told us you would deride us for making peace. Call you the money the king giveth us a pension? It is tribute; and by St. George you may babble so much that you may soon make us to return.' But I," continues the judicious minister, "brake off the talke, and turned it to a jest; notwithstanding, the Englishman was discontented, and cast out a word thereof to the king, who was marvellously offended with the Lord of Narbonne for his speech."

Edward, secure upon his throne, disregarded the indications of popular feeling which reached his ears; not one of his nobles had possessed sufficient virtue to reject the tempting offers of Louis; nay, they were to a man retained in his pay, and the disaffected portion of the nation destitute of a leader to incite them to a more dangerous manifestation of their resentment, allowed their angry passions to evaporate
1467. in words. The king by a harsh yet well-timed severity punished the too licentious expressions of his subjects, visited with inflexible justice the outrages of his disbanded soldiery, and giving the sanction of his presence to the provincial circuits, enforced the most rigid decree of the law upon every convicted culprit, whatever might have been his station or his services. Terrified into submission by these vigorous measures, the nation became tranquil, and ceased to animadvert upon the proceedings of the government.

The Duke of Bretagne, overpowered by the weight of his obligations to Edward, nearly sacrificed to his

gratitude the exiles whom he had generously refused to deliver up in his necessities. The King of England, tormented with a prophetic fear of danger to his house from young Richmond, persuaded his too credulous ally that he was actuated by the most friendly and honourable motives in his desire to obtain possession of the earl, being anxious to secure his affection and to attach him to his interests by giving him one of his daughters in marriage. The duke deceived by these assurances resigned his prisoners into the hands of the ambassadors appointed by Edward to receive them;* but Cheulet, one of his council, suspecting the monarch's sincerity,† represented in strong and animated terms to this honourable prince the indelible stain which would darken his memory, if the nobles, to whom in their adversity he had granted shelter and protection, should by his connivance be involved in death and ruin; and touched by the generous eloquence of his faithful adviser, he dispatched Peter Landois, a favourite servant, to prevent their departure from his dominions. The delay of an hour would have changed the destinies of Henry Tudor, upon the point of embarking at St. Maloes to meet a doubtful fate; his voyage was arrested by the joyful interposition of the duke's faithful servant; a stratagem was necessary to recover him from the grasp of Edward: the embassadors were secure of their prize, and Landois engaged them in conversation whilst Pembroke and Richmond, apprised of the duke's change of measures, hastened into sanctuary, and remained protected by the inviolable privileges of

* Comines. † Hull.

CHAP. V. their asylum until the return of Edward's messengers to England. Francis handsomely excused his non-compliance with the king's wishes, and assured him that he might banish all apprehension of injury from his prisoners, whom he would guard too effectually for the chance of their accomplishing the slightest evil against his crown and government; and Edward, either really innocent of those sanguinary intentions imputed to him, or fearful of betraying a criminal design upon these unhappy fugitives, abstained from any farther attempt to obtain the custody of their persons.

The importance of the heir of the illegitimate house of Somerset, a young man scarcely possessing the shadow of a right to the English throne, destitute of family connections, all his relations, with the exception of his mother and his exiled uncle, having been swept away in the civil wars, an alien without property, patronage, or influence, affords a strong proof of the inveterate prejudices of the Lancastrians; and the determined yet apparently hopeless obstinacy with which they clung to the withering branches of the red rose; yet Edward with short-sighted policy listened to the unkind suggestions of the enemies of Clarence, and suffering his long slumbering anger to be rekindled, in pursuing the dictates of revenge, destroyed one of the bulwarks of his throne.

CHAPTER VI.

Struggles in the Cabinet—Edward's Indolence—Discontent of Clarence—he aspires to the Hand of the Princess of Burgundy—Disappointment of his Hopes—Enmity of the Queen—Impolicy of Clarence Misconstruction of Burdett's hasty Speech—Persecution of the Duke's Servants—Arrest of Clarence—his Trial before the Peers—The King's Speech in Parliament—Condemnation of Clarence—his friendless Situation—his mysterious Death—Edward's bitter Repentance—Misfortunes of the Heirs of Clarence—Grants to Lord Rivers—Edward devotes himself to Pleasure—he enriches himself by Trade—Base Conduct of the French King—Edward projects Alliances for his Children—Marriage of the Infant Duke of York with a Baby Wife—Stately Hunt at Waltham—Present to the Citizens' Wives—Treachery of Louis XI.—Lord Howard's Mission to Paris—Rupture with Scotland—Intemperate Language of Edward and James—Rebellious Spirit of the Scottish Nobles—Execution of the Earl of Mar—Albany's Visit at the English Court—his Proposals to Edward—Siege of Berwick—Destruction of the Favourites of James—Albany and Gloucester advance to Edinburgh—Reconciliation of Albany and his Brother—Edward's Discontent at the Expences of the War—Breach between France and England—Edward's Illness—his ineffectual Attempt to reconcile the Nobles—he repents of his Extortion—Death of the King—Edward's Disposition and Character—Reports in France respecting the Cause of his Death.

CHAP. VI.

1476.

WHILST profound tranquillity reigned abroad, and a deceitful calm lulled Edward into fatal security at home, the English council-chamber was filled with intrigue and cabal. A formidable party opposed

CHAP. VI.

themselves to the queen's relations; and though the struggles of the rival factions for power were no longer as heretofore backed by hosts of armed retainers, they entailed the same deadly consequences on the realm, sacrificed the life of Clarence, and paved the way to new scenes of blood and carnage. The brothers of Elizabeth Gray though amiable were ambitious; they saw themselves held in scorn by a haughty nobility, and they sought to gain supremacy over contemptuous superiors in birth, by new acquisitions, which in increasing honours and riches already considered above their desert, added fresh incitements to the jealousy of their enemies.

The king plunged into a career of vicious extravagance, surrounded by courtezans, and studying only how to feed his intemperance by enriching the crown revenues without the risque of alienating his subjects' hearts by the imposition of heavy taxes, was too much engaged in these pleasures and cares to direct his attention to the most effectual means of counteracting the evils threatened by the dangerous strife of his nobles: and content with soothing them into temporary pacification, sought only to engage the rival parties in the gay revels of a profligate court. Smiles played upon the features of those who sate round the monarch's festal board, but envy, hatred, and jealousy rankled with festering anguish in their hearts.

Edward's schemes of finance had given umbrage to his brother, the acts passed by parliament for the resumption of royal grants, though frequent, had seldom been productive in consequence of the danger of depriving potent nobles of their wealth;

but the king was now more desirous of conciliating the commons than fearful of offending the higher classes; he was aware that the popularity of his government depended upon the relief of the nation from those burthens which former sovereigns had imposed, and he turned his attention to less grievous means of filling the treasury and providing for the expenditure of a splendid household; the duties on the customs were levied with unwonted strictness, he enforced the payment of the tenths from the clergy, obliged the superior orders of ecclesiastics to compound for the restoration of their temporalities with large sums, and took into his own hands those estates belonging to the crown which the parliament had enabled him to resume.* In pursuing the last measure the king made no exception in favour of the Duke of Clarence; and the proud covetous temper of that prince could not brook the loss of any portion of the immense wealth which he had amassed with little regard to the interests of others or to his own reputation. He betrayed his displeasure by a sullen humour which refused to yield to the most conciliating attentions, could seldom be persuaded to appear at court, avoided the festal banquets of the king, or refused to sit at the same board; and when he condescended to attend the council, kept aloof from his companions and displayed his indifference or dislike to their proceedings by an inflexible silence. This conduct offended the king, more especially as the eyes of the nation were turned upon Clarence with affectionate reverence. Sharing in the popularity of Warwick, after the death of the

* History of Croyl.

CHAP. VI.

earl, he became the idol of the common people, and their undisguised partiality was in itself sufficient to excite Edward's jealousy, since he could not forget the idea once contemplated of the transfer of the crown from his own brows to those of his brother: no subsequent services could obliterate this bitter remembrance, and the defection of Clarence from the Nevills might be imputed rather to the defeat of his own hopes in the ambitious earl's preference of the claim of Edward of Lancaster, than to any unbiassed impulse of a repentant heart in favour of an injured brother.

Clarence had become a widower; the loss of his wife was attended by mysterious circumstances; she fell into a state of debility after the birth of her third child, and languishing for the space of two months died, not without strong suspicion of being prematurely hastened to her grave by poison. Ankaret Twynhyo* one of her female attendants, was charged with the deed, found guilty at a public trial
1476. and suffered the sentence of the law. About the same period the Duke of Burgundy finished his rash career before Nanci, and his sole heiress the Princess Mary became the object of attraction to a crowd of potentates and nobles eagerly aspiring to her hand. The Duchess of Burgundy her step-mother pleaded not unavailingly in favour of the Duke of Clarence; he was Margaret's favourite brother, and she was anxious to secure for him the noble orphan's rich domains. A base sentiment upon the part of Edward prevented a marriage which would have been highly advantageous to England; his mean conces-

* Parliament Rolls.

sions to Louis XI. had enabled that worldly-minded monarch to aggrandize his kingdom by the spoil of its most potent vassal; casting his rapacious eyes over the fair duchy, both fraud and force were employed in its subjection; and immediately upon the demise of his dreaded enemy he seized upon the frontier towns, and by the machiavelian policy which he so well knew how to practice involved the luckless Mary's subjects in domestic dissensions, while he committed the most daring ravages upon places left defenceless and open to his grasp.* The union of Normandy and Guienne to the crown had given gigantic power to France, and it was the interest of England to prevent new acquisitions of territory to a neighbour so ambitious and so formidable; but Edward, smitten with a life of slothful ease, fettered by the golden chains which Louis had cast around him, and unwilling to embroil himself in a hazardous war for the elevation of a man whom he feared would turn the wealth and resources of Burgundy against the English crown, resolutely and successfully opposed the suit of Clarence.

The duke's mortification and resentment at this repulse was deepened by another circumstance. The queen was his enemy.† He had never deigned to conceal his unmitigated scorn of her family, and endeavoured upon all occasions to make them feel their inferiority. These provocations inspired a narrow-minded woman with the desire of revenge. She cherished dark recollections of his enmity to her children, and his nearly triumphant attempt to supplant them. Her brother was also a widower, and

* Comines. † Hall.

CHAP. VI.

taken his murdered friends. Disregarding every prudent consideration for his own safety, he thought only of the vindication of these slandered men. They had been attended in their last moments by a celebrated divine named Goddard. Impressed with a conviction of their innocence he accompanied the duke to the council chamber at Westminster, and presented copies of the sufferers' private and public declarations to the assembled lords.* Edward, informed of his brother's generous interference, hastened from Windsor to London, summoned the mayor and sheriffs to his presence, and calling the duke before them, loaded him with reproach and accusation. The last act magnified into the commission of treason, and every petty aggression swelled into an unpardonable crime, Clarence having sustained the bitterest invectives from the enraged monarch, was arrested by his order and sent a prisoner to the tower.

The unfortunate duke was now completely at the mercy of his enemies. The queen it is said pursued him with unremitting hatred; the Wydevilles, with whom he was at open variance, probably urged his death as an act of justice for the past, and precaution against future wrongs; and Gloucester, if not adding his voice to the general outcry, was silent and acquiescent in the revengeful schemes of his less crafty foes. Edward's fierce spirit lashed into fury by the malignant representations of those about him, trampled upon every sentiment of humanity and feeling. A scene more appalling than any spectacle which the most barbarous age of England had pro-

* Continuation of Croyl.

duced, was acted in the House of Lords. Clarence appeared as a prisoner at the bar, and the king forgetful of the fraternal tie stood up as the accuser of his brother. *Edward in addressing the assembly enumerated the benefits which he had lavishly bestowed upon an ungrateful kinsman, who he declared in despite of this liberal bounty had conspired with his enemies, driven him into exile, and consented to his deposition. Pardoned for crimes so flagrant and unnatural, the monarch averred that he had again meditated the seizure of the crown, and in pursuance of his new designs employed his servants in exciting the commons to sedition: they were directed to blacken the king's character by impiously charging him with the practice of necromantic arts, and to seduce the people from their allegiance by promulgating a report of his illegitimacy; thereby affirming that he was incapable of reigning according to the constitution of the country. Edward then proceeded to state that the duke had commenced his intended usurpation by procuring unlawful oaths from misguided men, who swore upon the holy sacrament to be true to him and his heirs, without any regard to the fealty so solemnly pledged to their rightful sovereign; that he had retained in his possession a copy of the act of parliament entailing the kingdom, in default of male issue to the House of Lancaster, upon himself and his children; that he had privately commanded his retainers to be in constant readiness to join him in arms, and that he had endeavoured to introduce a stranger into his castle to personate his son, whom he intended

CHAP. VI. 1473.

* Parliament Rolls.

CHAP. VI.

to send into a foreign country, under the pretence that his life was endangered by the machinations of the king.* Clarence answered boldly to these allegations, offering to prove his innocence by single combat: the reply has not been preserved, but he is reported to have sustained the charge without
1478. shrinking, and his retorts we are told were keen and acrimonious.† The rank and character of his accuser ensured his doom; if the duke possessed any friends they were mute, and the ominous silence which followed his defence was only interrupted by a decla-
Feb. 7. ration against him: he was found guilty without a dissentient voice, and the Duke of Buckingham who had been appointed lord high-steward for the occasion, passed the awful judgment of the peers, and sentenced him to death. Buckingham was also directed to superintend the execution, but Edward still retaining a faint touch of pity in his iron breast, could not send his brother forth to perish on a scaffold. The completion of the tragedy was delayed, and perchance if the king had been left to the suggestions of his own heart, he might have extended mercy to so near a relative, but active spirits were at work, intent upon the ruin of the duke; no gentle tongue pleaded in his favour and implored for pardon; no kind friend palliated his errors, excused his faults, or called to remembrance that eminent service which he had rendered the monarch in deserting the victorious arms of Warwick: his crimes were the theme of conversation, and men dwelt upon his ambition and his perjury: vindictive enemies were loud and urgent in demanding his death, and the commons incited to join the league against him, peti-

* Parliament Rolls. † History of Croyle.

tioned the king to execute justice on his brother.* Edward with late regard to decency was unwilling to amaze the world with the public sacrifice of a prince of the blood: the axe, the block, and the grim headsman were spared, but life was not permitted to the unfortunate object of hatred and jealousy. The duke was privately made away with in the tower, drowned or stifled according to common report in a butt of Malmsey wine, a strange mode of destruction, which has met with little credence in a more enlightened age. A slight attempt was made to conceal the dark transaction which deprived Clarence of his life, in the announcement of his demise. The people were informed that he had died of melancholy; no one, however, at any period, either at the time or subsequently, entertained the least doubt of his murder, although the precise method never transpired.

When the doom of Clarence was irrevocably sealed agonizing remorse sprang up in Edward's breast, continually haunted by recollections of the fatal catastrophe which had dispatched his victim with cruel and untimely haste to the grave, the anguish of his soul burst forth in unavailing lamentations. Frequently sued to remit the sentence of malefactors condemned to condign punishment, he answered the pleaders with bitter exclamations of reproachful grief: "Oh, unfortunate brother, for whose life not one creature would make intercession."†

Clarence left two children, a son and a daughter, to whom his evil fortune was bequeathed; both perished on a scaffold. Dragged to the block by the

* Parliament Rolls. † Hall.

CHAP. VI.

savage order of a relentless tyrant, Henry VIII.; the grey hairs of the latter were dyed in her blood, and in the former, executed in the preceding reign, the proud name of Plantagenet was extinguished. Lord Rivers became the chief gainer by the duke's confiscated estates; they were granted to him as a compensation for the injuries which he had sustained from his slaughtered enemy, and in the hope, it was hypocritically said, that the duke's soul would derive benefit in consequence of this just reparation.* A specious pretext for the plunder of the luckless heirs. The wardship of the children, a lucrative office in these times, was given to the Marquis of Dorset, the queen's son by her first husband, and this division of the spoil to the exclusion of Gloucester, has been adduced as a proof that the duke did not share in the conspiracy against his brother: if not an active performer he was at least a passive spectator in the dismal scene, for it is plain from the repentant king's upbraiding ejaculations, that he made no effort to save him.

Edward endeavoured to escape from the terrors of thought by plunging into a ruinous dissipation, which enervated his mind and rendered him utterly regardless of his own and the national glory. The cares of state were confined to the means of acquiring riches; for this end he even descended to engage in commerce, a mode of amassing wealth which was held in scorn by men who thought open robbery far less beneath the dignity of an exalted station.† The king's ships laden with tin, wool, and cloth, traded in the ports of Italy and Greece,

* Rymer. † History of Croyle.

and these commodities were in his name exposed in the public markets. He grew rich; but becoming more avaricious as his coffers filled, he permitted Louis, for the sake of the gold crowns annually poured into his treasury, to pursue his ambitious plans against the House of Burgundy without interruption; a pensioned ministry sharing in the monarch's disgraceful weakness, and flattering it for the sake of a paltry bribe. Suffered to grovel under the base slavery of his passsions without one awakening remonstrance, in the desperate situation of the daughter of his old and brave ally Edward contented himself with sending an embassy to the French court to mediate a peace. The perfidious king at first soothed his visitors with artful speeches, and soon perceiving how little they were inclined to aid the suffering lady, ventured to propose the union of Edward's arms with those of France in the seizure and division of her territories. The English monarch equally heartless and rapacious approved the project, but could not be prevailed upon to accept Flanders and Brabant, which still remained in her possession, instead of Picardy, already conquered and advantageously situated in the close vicinity of Calais. Louis would not permit the nation he so much dreaded to recover a foot of land upon his frontier, and Mary of Burgundy, who had vainly clung to the friendship of England for support in her distress, thus threatened on all sides, concluded a hasty marriage with Maximilian, Arch Duke of Austria, which enabled her to retain some part of her rich inheritance.*

Edward flattered with the expectation of uniting

* Comines.

CHAP. VI.

his eldest daughter to the Dauphin of France, amused himself with making contracts for the rest of his children. He entered into a treaty with Scotland for the marriage of Cecily, his second daughter, with the son and heir of James; negociated with Bretagne for the hand of Anne, afterwards the Queen of Charles VIII., for the Prince of Wales, and caused the nuptials or the betrothment to be celebrated between the young Duke of York and the Lady Anne, heiress of the Duke of Norfolk; the parties were both children, and neither ever reached maturity.

1477. Upon this occasion we are told that a splendid field was held for the martial amusements of the time.* Six gentlemen challenged "all commers at the just roiall, to runne in osting harnies alonge a tilte, and to strike thirteen strokes with swordes, in honour of the marriage of Richard Duke of York with the Lady Anne, daughter of the Duke of Norfolk." Satisfied with these political arrangements of which not one ever took place, the king abandoned himself to feasting and jollity. Forced into the field by his necessities he threw away the sword which had covered him with glory the moment that the last domestic enemy was slain; and foreign potentates who might have been taught to tremble at his power, regarded him as a weak voluptuous prince, only provoked to quit his silken couch by the thunder of war at his palace gates, and the beaten foe crushed beneath his never failing arm, returning to the lap of pleasure again, uninterested in foreign politics, and too indolent to pluck the laurels which offered

* Harleian MSS.

themselves to his grasp. Rioting in the indulgences of the table, Edward's person became bloated and unwieldy through inordinate intemperance; surrounded with minstrelsy, and lapt in luxurious ease, the spirit-stirring trumpet had long been rejected for the soft breathings of the lute, we do not hear of his exploits at the Tourney, and the chase was the only athletic exercise which roused him from a life of effeminate sloth.

Always attentive to the means of ingratiating himself with the Londoners, towards the close of his reign the king invited the principal citizens to hunt with him in the Forest of Waltham;* a feast was spread for them under green bowers, and the courteous monarch refused to sit until he saw his guests served: with his usual gallantry towards the fair sex he admitted them into a participation of the favours conferred upon their male relations, sending to the Lady Mayoress and her sisters, the aldermen's wives, two harts, six bucks, and a tun of wine, with which we are told they made merry in Draper's Hall.*

The last years of Edward's life were embittered by contentions with France and Scotland. He discovered the dissimulation of the former power when too late. Louis anxious at any rate to purchase peace, had beguiled him with a deceitful hope of a marriage between the Dauphin and the Princess Elizabeth of England; but if he ever seriously intended that the marriage should take place, he did not hesitate to break his engagement when a more advantageous alliance offered. All that secret in-

* Fabian.

CHAP. VI.

trigue and open hostility could effect had been long employed in the subjugation of Burgundy; the union of Mary with the imperial family, had alone preserved it from becoming an appendage to the already enormous territory of France, and the birth of a daughter to the King of the Romans rendered Louis careless of the treaty with England, which he abandoned for the prospect of negociating a marriage with the house of Burgundy, which promised to secure to him a portion of the coveted dominions.*

Symptoms of the French king's intended breach of faith had long been manifest to all except the trusting Edward and his sanguine consort, who, notwithstanding the assurances of the ambassadors from Bretagne and Burgundy would not believe that they had been deceived by their artful ally. The members of the English cabinet were mute, for their silence had been purchased with foreign gold, and Edward himself unwilling to risk the loss of his pension forbore even to remonstrate until the king's duplicity was too apparent to admit the shadow of a doubt. Roused from his lethargy the king dispatched the Lord Howard upon an embassy to Paris to demand the immediate accomplishment of the marriage. Louis no longer compelled to disguise his sentiments haughtily refused compliance, and threatened to withdraw the annual payment of the fifty thousand crowns, one of the articles of the same degrading treaty, by which Edward had been duped to forego the hope of regaining the fertile provinces won by his ancestors, of diminishing the power of France,

* Comines.

and of preserving the persecuted vassals of that encroaching monarchy from utter ruin. CHAP. VI.

About the same time the King of Scotland broke off his engagements with Edward, and the enraged monarch suspecting that he had been secretly stimulated to this perfidy by the intrigues of Louis, immediately commenced preparations for the invasion of Scotland; being anxious to reduce his hostile neighbour, that he might leave England secure from his incursions, while, if Louis should finally retract his plighted word, he proceeded to humble the power and insolence of France. The quarrel between the two sovereigns was fierce and rancorous; James branded Edward with the title of robber, and the English monarch retorted with bitter acrimony. Both parties seemed equally anxious for war. James commanded his army in person, and the English forces were led by the Duke of Gloucester; continual skirmishes occurred upon the marches between the borderers, seldom restrained from committing mutual depredations in more peaceable times; but no general engagement took place, and two years elapsed without producing any event of importance. 1478. 1482.

The King of Scotland had long been at variance with his nobility; the society of a rude and barbarous aristocracy possessed no charm for a prince imbued with a taste for the fine arts; valuing the elegant accomplishments far above the mere outward insignia of rank, he collected around him a circle of foreigners (the more odious on that account), distinguished for their mental acquirements, but of low birth, and therefore highly disdained by prejudiced ignorant men, proud of their ancestry, and incapable

CHAP. VI.

of estimating the refinements of the despised favourites. The Duke of Albany and the Earl of Mar, the king's brothers, shared in the discontent of the nobles, and James with a view to strike terror into the confederacy which he suspected had been formed against him, arrested them both, and confined them in separate prisons. Albany, aided by the captain of a French vessel, contrived to make his escape from Edinburgh castle, the scene of his incarceration, and flying to Paris remained some time in exile. The Earl of Mar less fortunate was accused of endeavouring to compass the king's death by the practice of magic arts, a charge which however malicious, was sanctioned by the superstition of the times, and being condemned by the royal council, was led to the Cannongate, where, spared the ignominy of the common mode of execution, he was suffered to expire from the loss of blood occasioned by the opening of a vein.*

Albany, burning to revenge his own wrongs and his brother's death, eagerly profited by the animosities of the two crowns, and repairing to the English court sought the friendship of its sovereign. Asserting the illegitimacy of James, a declaration somewhat justified by the scandalous reports which had clouded the fair fame of Mary of Gueldres, the dowager queen, he proclaimed himself king of Scotland, engaged to perform homage to Edward for his crown, and to deliver up the town and castle of Berwick; he also promised to relinquish the national alliance with France, and to apply to the church for permission to marry one of the English princesses,

* Buchanan.

an article in the treaty which suited Edward's peculiar anxiety for the elevation and aggrandizement of his daughters, and which he eagerly accepted, although the duke was already fettered in matrimonial bonds with two ladies, still living to claim the partnership of his throne. Edward agreed in return to afford the duke the assistance of an army in his projected enterprize.

The confederates commenced their march at the head of twenty-five thousand men, and laid siege to Berwick; the town surrendered immediately, but the castle holding out with desperate determination detained the invaders before its walls. In the interim a sudden revolution took place which completely changed the affairs of the king of Scotland; surrounded by his favourites he had advanced with the great lords and their retainers as far as Lauder. The nobles, more intent upon the redress of their own real or fancied grievances, than anxious to prosecute the war against England, met together in the church* to plot the ruin of their sovereign's councillors, or according to their own statement, to deliver him from a crew of upstart minions who had poisoned his ear and led him into the commission of many evils. Not one hesitated to pronounce sentence of death upon these hated rivals; but even the reckless valour of this daring band of conspirators was checked by the difficulties of the undertaking; the dauntless Earl of Angus, perceiving the dread and irresolution of his companions, sprang up, and offered himself as their leader, and at the moment that every sword was unsheathed, Cochran, an

* Lindsey.

CHAP. VI.

architect, whose exaltation to the peerage by the illustrious title of Mar, had given unconquerable umbrage, ignorant of his danger insolently entered the fierce assembly; the enraged nobles rushed upon the intruder, and accompanying the action with contemptuous speeches, tore the gold chains and the jewelled horn from his neck. "My lords," he exclaimed, "is it jest or earnest?" "Good earnest," they replied, "and so thou shalt find;" and giving him to the custody of their followers, burst into the king's tent, dragged six of his favourites from his presence to the bridge, where they were immediately sacrificed to party rage, being hung over the side, Cochran elevated in scorn above the rest. It is said that one of these devoted persons was saved by springing up behind the monarch who instantly took horse and flying to Edinburgh, threw himself into the castle, where he was detained a prisoner during the triumph of the nobles, who, notwithstanding their late violence, treated him with respect, issuing all their orders in his name.

The Dukes of Gloucester and Albany on learning the news hastened to Edinburgh with sixteen thousand men, whom they encamped at Restairig, in its close vicinity; the city surrendered, and Gloucester entered it alone, having much to his credit as a military commander, maintained strict discipline amongst the soldiers, whose orderly demeanour and excellent conduct was the subject of just encomium.* The Duke of Albany appeared to be at the summit of his ambitious hopes, but when all eyes were turned in expectation of his seizure of the crown,

* Drummond.

he either became alarmed, or relented in favour of so near a relative, and suffering mutual friends to mediate between him and his brother, promised to renew his oath of allegiance upon receiving an unconditional pardon, and the restoration of all his honours. CHAP. VI.

In this treaty the claims of the king of England were not disregarded; the duke and his associates engaged that the provost and merchants of Edinburgh should give security for the repayment of the several sums of money which Edward had advanced as his daughter Cecily's portion, unless he should still desire the alliance, and to deliver the castle of Berwick into his hands.* Albany then invested Edinburgh castle with an armed force, rescued his brother, and to prove the sincerity of their reconciliation they rode to Holyrood upon the same horse, and slept together in the same bed. The war being thus happily concluded, the Duke of Gloucester returned to Berwick, took possession of the castle, and then marched southwards.

Edward, although the conduct of his brother was highly commended, and he himself was so well satisfied with his zeal and talents that he conferred upon him several valuable grants, which were ratified by the consent of Parliament (eager to show their estimation of the duke's services), was not pleased at the slight advantage which accrued to England, in return for the money (one hundred thousand pounds) which he had lavished upon the expedition; the possession of Berwick, although a desirable acquisition was

* Rymer

CHAP. VI.

scarcely an equivalent for so large a sum, more particularly as it could not be maintained without a yearly expenditure of ten thousand marks.

And now the last hope of the alliance with France, to which in despite of all the warnings which he had received, Edward still fondly clung, was utterly destroyed. The unfortunate heiress of Burgundy dying in consequence of a fall from her horse, left two children at the mercy of the citizens of Ghent. The intrigues of Louis had secured these headstrong factious men in his interest, and deriding the opposition of Maximilian, who with the insolence of wealth they despised on account of his poverty, they obliged him to consent to the alliance of his baby daughter with the Dauphin of France, and the betrothment was publicly celebrated at Paris amidst universal rejoicings.* The pension also which Louis had engaged that his descendants should pay to Edward IV. and his descendants during the period of one hundred years after his death, was withdrawn; and the crafty monarch now strong enough to insult England with impunity, derided the anger of the credulous negociator whom he had so openly and so shamelessly deceived. Breathing nothing but revenge, Edward entered into a second treaty with the fickle and turbulent Duke of Albany, who had again revolted from his newly pledged allegiance, and appealing to the honourable feelings of a nation ever ready to resent an injury by the sword, seriously prepared to take a sudden and signal vengeance upon his exulting enemy.

* Comines.

But the time had elapsed in which Edward might have renewed the glories of his illustrious forefathers. France was spared a desolating war, and England destined to endure new calamities from civil broils. The king's luxury and intemperance had destroyed his constitution; the rage and anger which burned within him shook an enervated frame; and indulging, as usual, in the gross pleasures of the table, he was taken ill after partaking too largely in the luxuries of a splendid banquet: alarming symptoms soon appeared, a grave yawned before him, and suddenly the follies and crimes of his past life rushed upon his stricken soul, and he vainly endeavoured in the short space which divided him from eternity to repair the sins and errors of a long career of vice. The quarrels and factions of the nobility filled the dying monarch with terror; he saw the evils which clouded the early years of Henry VI. and darkened its close, renewed in the minority of his own offspring; and summoning the nobles to the couch of death, in his almost expiring accents he exhorted them to forego their private animosities and unite with one accord in the protection of the realm.* The Lords Howard, Stanley, and Hastings, who were, though opposed to the queen's relations, the monarch's personal favourites and friends, embraced the Marquis of Dorset in his presence, and each pledged his word to pardon and bury in oblivion all former grievances. Edward, deluded by a hope that those nobles thus solemnly adjured were sincere in their promises, turned his distracted

* Rous.

CHAP. VI.

thoughts to religious exercises. Struck with late remorse he directed that from his ill-acquired treasures restitution should be made to those from whom he had unjustly wrung the profits of their honest toil; and having thus with fruitless repentance, as far as it regarded the affairs of this world, endeavoured to atone for the miseries in which he had plunged whole families ruined by his tyrannous rapacity, he closed his eyes upon the scene of his despotism and his triumphs, dying prematurely in the forty-first year of his age, after a reign of twenty-one years, in which, notwithstanding the abuse of his naturally fine talents and the absence of every active virtue, he had retained the affection of his subjects.

April. 1483.

An ocean of blood had flowed by Edward's command. He was seldom known to pardon. Victory plumed her wings upon his banner, and cruelty gave a second edge to his conquering sword. The nobles, appalled by the success and the severity which marked his intrepid struggle for supremacy yielded to his government; and instead of haughtily contending as heretofore for their privileges, played the part of smiling courtiers, anxiously conducing to the monarch's festal pleasures, rather than striving to arouse him from the couch of luxurious sloth to new exertions.* Suspicion, the meet companion of ferocity, haunted Edward's dark soul. After the defeat and death of Warwick he established a system of espionage which rendered him perfectly acquainted with the sentiments and conduct of all those persons whose hostility he had any reason to apprehend.

* Continuation of Croyle.

His memory was particularly faithful: he never forgot the face of a single individual whom he had once seen, and recollected every circumstance connected with their lives and characters with astonishing accuracy, notwithstanding the vast accumulation of various information which his inquisitorial policy produced.* Fascinating in his manners, splendid in his household, kind and courteous to the private circle of his intimates, he possessed the happy art of conciliating every class of society; and kept in awe by the vigorous administration which, notwithstanding his indolent propensities, characterized the whole of his reign, the nation forgot or excused his most atrocious offences, and bowed without reluctance to his iron sway. Edward left eight children, two sons and six daughters born in wedlock, an illegitimate son named William, and a daughter Elizabeth by Elizabeth Lucie, one of the three mistresses whom he openly kept in the presence of the queen: a breach of decorum unknown to the English court since the licentious reign of John. CHAP. VI.

The monarch's death was imputed by the French, anxious to claim the honour of having killed a king of England, to grief at the disappointment of the projected alliance with the dauphin; and Louis, hovering himself upon the brink of the grave, rejoiced that his subtlety had over-reached and finally, according to his flattering hopes, destroyed the adversary of whom he stood most in fear.† The body of the deceased king was exposed to public view, naked from the waist upwards, for the space of ten

* Continuation of Croyle. † Comines.

CHAP. VI.

hours, in which the corpse was visited by the lords spiritual and temporal and the city authorities. His death took place in the palace of Westminster, and his remains were consigned with fitting pomp to the new chapel which he had built at Windsor.

CHAPTER VII.

The King's Love of Dress—Sumptuary Laws—New Fashions—Mode of wearing the Hair—Penalties for making piked Shoes—Costliness of Banquets—Strange Modes of Cookery—Receipts for several Dishes—The Soteltie—Great Feast at the Marriage of Lionel Duke of Clarence—and at subsequent Festivals—Sumptuous Banquet given by Archbishop Neville—Ceremonies observed in taking the Assay—Dearth of the common Necessaries of the Table amidst its Splendour—Amusements of Edward's Court—Sports and Pastimes of the English People—Tournaments—Splendour of the Nobles when appearing in the Lists—Laws of the Tournament—Statutes published by the Earl of Worcester—Military Toys—Caxton laments the Decay of Chivalry—Knights-Errant—Introduction of Tilts—Pastimes of the lower Orders—Masquings and Mummings—Sports of London from old Times—Entertainments devised by the Citizens for the Royal Family—Christmas Games—Festivities at Easter—and on May Day—Poem of Lydgate's—Rejoicings on Saints' Days—Procession of the Watch—Wrestling at Clerkenwell on Saint Bartholomew's Day—Stow laments the Progress of Gaming—Statutes against unlawful Games—Love of Strange Sights—A Turkish Dwarf.

CHAP. VII.

EDWARD was immoderately attached to the fopperies of dress. He studied new devices for the decoration of his person, continually appearing in some strange and becoming garb of silk or velvet richly ornamented and lined with costly furs. He refused to allow any person beneath the rank of a

CHAP. VII.

prince of the blood to wear cloth of gold or silk of regal purple, limited gold tissue to dukes, and confined the glittering manufacture in its plainest state entirely to the nobility. Velvet, satin, and damask, by these sumptuary laws, were only permitted to knights and gentlemen; and the lower orders of labourers, artificers, and servants were restricted to the use of cloth not exceeding two shillings a yard.

Monstrelet informs us that during the period of Edward's reign the fashion of dress sustained a considerable alteration. "The ladies and damsels," says the historian, "laid aside their long trains to their gowns, and in lieu of them had deep borders of furs of minever, martin and others, or of velvet, and various articles of a great breadth. They also wore hoods on their heads of a circular form, half an ell or three quarters high gradually tapering to the top. Some had them not so high with handkerchiefs wreathed round them, the corners hanging down to the ground. They wore silken girdles of greater breadth than formerly, with the richest shoes, with golden necklaces much more trimly decked in divers fashions than they were accustomed to wear them. At the same time the men wore shorter dresses than usual. The sleeves of their outward dress and jackets were slashed to shew their wide white shirts. Their hair was so long that it covered their faces and eyes; and on their heads they had cloth bonnets of a quarter of an ell in height. Knights and esquires indifferently wore the most sumptuous golden chains. Even the varlets had jackets of silk, satin, or velvet; and almost all, especially at the courts of princes, wore peaks at their shoes a quarter of an

ell in length. They had also under their jackets large stuffings at their shoulders to make them appear broad, which is a very vanity and perchance displeasing to God; and he who was short dressed to-day, on the morrow had his robe training on the ground. These fashions were so universal that there was not any little gentleman but would ape the nobles and the rich, whether they dressed in long or short robes, never considering the great expence, nor how unbecoming it was to their situation." These foreign modes travelled swiftly to England. An old writer complains that Englishman allowed their hair to grow so long that it hid their foreheads, which bore the mark of the cross in baptism; and that the capes of the tunics and mantles were as short as if they were preparing to be beheaded. "Formerly," observes the satirist, "they were made high that they might stand up to keep the cold out of their necks, but now they are short as if intended to be out of the way of the executioner's axe." Gough remarks the superior elegance of the costume of Edward IV. particularly with respect to female attire. Necklaces fancifully set with precious stones, similar to those mentioned by Monstrelet, appear upon the monumental effigies of ladies of rank; their veils flow gracefully behind their heads, and their robes are ornamented at the bottom with a deep border. "In the middle of the fifteenth century," observes our author, "female dress made great approaches to that worn in the succeeding one; the long sleeves were left off entirely, the mantle exchanged for a flowing gown, tightened more indeed round the waist, but training in the skirts like

CHAP. VII.

modern dress. The head dress floated more at ease, with veil-like lappets stretched on wires and supported by a stiffened cawl." The absurd custom of wearing pikes to the shoes still continued. Paradin tells us that "the men wore shoes with a point before half a foot long; the richer and more eminent personages wore them a foot, and princes two feet long, which was the most ridiculous thing ever seen; and when men became tired of these pointed shoes, which were called poulaines, they adopted others in their stead denominated duck-bills." Edward IV. disapproved of these unseemly fashions; and in the fourth year of his reign all shoemakers or cobblers in London, or within three miles of the metropolis, were forbidden to make or cause to be made any shoes or buskins with pikes or poulaines exceeding the length of two inches, upon pain of forfeiting twenty shillings.

The king's feasts were gorgeous, and distinguished for the gross hospitality of the times; abundance supplied the place of elegance, and the slight degree of delicacy observed in the cookery was compensated by the gold and silver garniture attached to the principal dishes at great men's tables. The privileges of rank were extended in these days to the serving up of a fowl, "a hole chykyn for a lorde." For a lorde, put no broth thereto, but yolkes of cyren (eggs) beaten." These directions, which appear in a manuscript preserved in the library of the Royal Society, shew the exclusive deference yielded by the commons, and exacted by men of gentle birth. Squirrels were esteemed dainties only fit for "a greate lorde," and a dish of fish if destined for a nobleman

was to be seasoned with "a dragge of fine sugar." A roasted pig sent up to "the borde of a lorde, or feste royal" was to be crossed with bars of silver and gold "foyle." Upon solemn occasions a peacock or pheasant appeared "dight" with its plumage, according to the following receipt. "Take and flee off the skynne with the fedurs, tayle, and nekke, and the hede thereon; then take the skynne with all the fedurs, and lay hit on a table abrode; and strewe thereon grounden comyn; then take the pecokke and roste hym, and endore him with rawe yolkes of egges; and when he is rosted take hym off, and let hym coole awhile, and take and sowe hym in his skynne, and gilde his combe, and so serve hym forthe with the last cours." Amid the dainties of these times "botyr of almondes," seems to have been in much esteem; there are directions for preparing it, but as the process is very simple the reader perhaps may be better pleased to learn the ingredients of more complicated dishes: one entitled "browat farsure," is particularly curious. "Take fresh broth of beef, and red wyne, and boyle hom togeder, and cast thereto clowes, maces, pynes, reisings of corance, gynger mynced, sugre, and swete wyne; and take chippes of bread stepet in broth, and draw hit up with red wyne, and caste into the same pot; and then take conynges parboyled, or elles rabets, for that are better for a lorde, and frie hom in fresh grees, and hole for a lorde; and for other culpon hom of gobettes, and take partriches and pulle hom and crush hom, and frie hom also: and when the conynges and the partriches ben half friet, cast hom into the same pot, and let hom boyle togeder. And

CHAP. VII.

for a greate lorde, take squerelles instede of conynges, and dight hom as hit is before saide. And when all this is boyled ynough, take and put thereto a lytel vynegur and saunders, saffron, and pouder of canel streyned with wyne, and gif hit then a boyle after, and set hit down from the fire and caste therein pouder of gynger, and loke that the pottage be rennynge, and then dresse hit, and serve it forth all hole, a conynge and a partriche is a dish for a lorde." The following composition also which seems to be a rich paste of fish, spice, almonds, and sugar, put into egg shells, and crowned with gilded cloves, is scarcely to be paralleled by the most elaborate operations of modern cookery; it bears the name of "cyren gelide:" "Take milk of 1lb of almondes drawen up thick, and sit hit over the fire, and put thereto sugre, and when hit is boyled, set hit on side; and then take soundes of stock-fish, and of codlynge, and one gobet of thornbag, and sethe hom altogether; and when hit is sothern, thrieche oute the water, and bray hit, and in the braying alay it with the same mylk, and cast thereto clowes, and when hit is brayed draw hit thik through a streymour, and hete it over the fire. And take cyren (eggs) avoided all oute that is therein, and save the yolkes als hole as thow may, and wasse hom (the shells) clene; and then put in the stuff als hote into the shelles, and take clowes, and gilde the heddes, and plait hom aboven there hit is voyde, and set hom upright; and when the stuff is colde, pille away the shells, and take leches lumbard cut on leches, and lay hit on chargeours, and strewe above pouder of gynger, and sugre medeled togeder, then

set the cyren (eggs) between and serve it forthe." Besides these and similar highly seasoned dishes, the tables of the great boasted "tost roialle," "potage de frumerty," "crem of almondes," "appelun for a lorde," &c. &c. But the crown and grandeur of a banquet however splendidly furnished with confections, wild fowl, game, fish, and meat, "both sodden and rost," consisted in the soteltie or subtlety, a nondescript edifice composed of jelly, paste, or blanc manger, and labelled about with verses which usually, contained some coarse or unfathomable jest. Fabian gives a full description in his chronicle of three of these popular devices, which appeared at the coronation feast of Queen Catherine, wife of Henry V. The first course was graced by "a sotyltie," called a pellycan, syttynge on her nest with her byrdes, and an image of Saynt Katheryne holdinge a booke, and disputynge with the doctours, holdynge a reson in her right hande, sayinge "Madame le rayne," and the pellycan as an answere: "là est la signe, et du roy pur tenir isy, et à tout sa gent, elle mete sa entent." Next was served a soteltie named a panter, with an image of Saynt Katheryne, with a whale in her hande, and a rolle with a reson in that other hande, sayinge: "Le royne ma fille, in ceste ile par bonne reson anes renoun." There was also a march pane, garnyshed with dyurse fygures of angellys amonge the whiche was cut an ymage of Saynt Kathryn holding this reson: "Il est escrit, pur voir et dit, per mariage pur cest quene ne dure," and lastly, a sotiltie named a tigre lookyng in a mirror, and a man sitting on horsebacke clene armyd, holdyng in his armys a tiger whelp, with this reson: "Par force sang reson in

CHAP. VII.

ay pryse ceste beste," and with his one hand making a countenance of throwynge of miror at the great tigre, the which held this reson: "Gile the mirrour ne fete distour." And amid other splendid dishes, "Leche lumbarde flourished with colars of esses and brome coddes of gold in a target with the arms of the kings and the queens departed, and Flampan florysshed with a escochen rural, theryn three crownes of golde and plaited with floure de lise of golde and flowers of camomile wrought in confections."

Nothing could exceed the profuse splendour of the banquets of the middle ages; Stow tells us, that at the marriage of Lionel Duke of Clarence, there was a rich feast in which above thirty courses were served at table, and the fragments that remained were more than sufficient to have served a thousand people. The entertainment given in honour of the second nuptials of Henry IV., in 1403, consisted of six courses: the first of these was of flesh and fowl, the last three chiefly of fish.* The banquets at the coronation of the consort of Henry V. and of that of Henry VI., described by Fabian, were equally magnificent; but all preceding feasts were surpassed by that given at the enthronization of George Nevill Archbishop of York, in the reign of Edward IV. The whole detailed account is to be found in Leland's collection,† who, previous to entering into particulars, gives a list of the "goodly provision made for the same," by which the reader may judge of the magnitude of the preparations. There were three hundred quarters of wheat, three hundred tuns of ale,

* Stow. † Vol. vi.

one hundred tuns of wine, one pipe of ipocrasse, one hundred and four oxen, six wild bulls, one thousand sheep, three hundred and four calves, the same number of porkers, four hundred swans, two thousand geese, one thousand capons, two thousand pigs, four hundred plovers, three times that number of quails, two thousand four hundred fowls called rees, one hundred and four peacocks, four thousand mallards and teals, two hundred and four cranes, an equal number of kids, two thousand chickens, the same number of pigeons, four thousand conies, two hundred and four bitterns, four hundred heron shews, two hundred pheasants, five hundred partridges, four hundred woodcocks, one hundred curlews, one thousand egritts, "five hundred and more" stags, bucks, and roes, four thousand cold pasties of venison, one thousand pasted dishes of jellies, three thousand plain dishes of jellies, four thousand cold tarts baked, three thousand cold custards baked, fifteen hundred hot pasties of venison, two thousand custards hot, three hundred and eight pikes and breams, twelve porpoises and seals, and lastly "spices, sugared delicates, and wafers plenty."

The guests were disposed in different apartments and at different tables in the great and lower hall, the chief chamber, and the gallery, sitting according to the respective rank of each. All the nobility of the land were present, an immense concourse of dignified ecclesiastics, the mayor of the staple of Calais, the mayor of York, and all the worshipful men of the city. The great lawyers, a fair assembly of peeresses and their attendant ladies of honour. Gentlemen and gentlewomen "of worship." Four

CHAP. VII.

hundred and twelve gentlemen franklins, and head yeoman, who sate in the lower hall, and were "twice filled and served," and upwards of four hundred servants of the nobility, accommodated in the gallery and also "twice filled and served." The names of the great lords and other persons who officiated, were first, the Earl of Warwick as steward, the Earl of Northumberland as treasurer, the Lord Hastings comptroller, the Lord Willoughby carver, the Lord John of Buckingham cup bearer, Sir Richard Strangwicke server, Sir Waller Worley marshal, and eight other knights for the hall: also eight squires, beside two other servers, and Sir John Malybery panter. The serjeant of the king's ewery as ewerer, Greystock and Nevill keepers of the cupboard, and Sir John Brecknock surveyor in the hall. It would be impossible to enumerate all the different dishes for which such abundant provision had been made, but amid the chief dainties, there was "a peacock in his hakell," a second of these imperial birds with "a gilt neb," a "dolphin in foyle," "leche lumbart gilt," "swan with gelandine as a sutteltie," a sutteltie of Saint George, another of a hart, a third of a dragon, a sutteltie of Sampson, and lastly one of St. William, with his coat armour between his hands, wafers, and ipocrasse, and Damask water to wash after dinner. There was also brawn and mustard with malmsey, and three courses of fish, in which, besides a great many not mentioned in the first rough bill of fare, were lobsters, jowls of fresh sturgeon, small minnows, ling in jelly, baked salmon, lampreys, and several others dressed in various ways. The turkey was at this period unknown in England; its

place was supplied at the board by fowls whose presence modern taste no longer sanctions, cranes and heron shews. Seals and porpoises are also excluded in these days, though formerly few banquets were served up without them. At the coronation dinner of Queen Catherine before mentioned, we read of "porpies rosted." These stately festivals were conducted with ceremonies and formalities of the most dull, solemn and tedious description. Every one of the dishes served up was to be tasted by the person who carried it, and giving the assay, as it was called, entailed a tiresome and nearly endless task upon the carver and panter, who were appointed for the purpose. The usher was directed to see the hall trimmed in every part, hung with a cloth of estate, and supplied with four cushions of estate of silk or cloth of gold, the boards and cupboards set in order, a sufficient number of chairs and stools to furnish the different tables, and a good fire kindled. It was the province of the yeoman of the ewery to decorate the cupboard with a cloth of estate, and to place the basin and the cup for the assay under the "chiefe napkins." Then the panter provided bread, salt, and trenchers, with a broad and a narrow knife and a spoon, which he placed with much care under "a coverpane of diaper of fine silk," and in like manner the cupboard was made ready with salt, bread, trenchers, napkins, spoons and other necessaries, belonging to the table." All these things performed, it was the duty of the panter to inquire whether the cooks were in attendance with the viands, and if they were, he informed the marshal, who commanded the carver, cup bearer, and sewer to wash at the ewery,

CHAP. VII.

and after this ceremony, the yeomen of the ewery armed the carver with a towel placed across the left shoulder, and under the right arm, and laid also the napkins of estate for the assay on the same shoulder, and the carver's own napkin on his left arm. The sewer likewise underwent the same ceremony. "Then," says the minute writer of these instructions, "the marshal with the carver must go toward the high table, and the panter to follow them, making their obeisance first in the midst of the hall, and again before the high Deane, then the marshal and the panter must stand still, and the carver must go to the table and there kneel on his knee, and then arise with a good countenance, and properly take off the coverpane of the salt, and give it to the panter, which must stand still." Then after a multitude of tedious ceremonies the carver is desired to uncover the salt which has been laid in a napkin under the diaper pane of silk before described, and with a cornet of bread to touch it in four places, and with his hand to make a flourish over it, and give it to the panter to eat for the assay thereof. The table is then to be furnished with trenchers, each one after another, and laid quadrant one beside another, and bread placed on the left hand of the lord of the banquet. In the meantime the yeoman of the livery is to be employed in laying the towel of estate upon the marshal's left shoulder, who is directed to give the cup and basin of assay to the cup-bearer, and to make his obedience to the chief personage or master of the house, kissing the towel and placing it on his left shoulder. The assay of the water is next to be taken by the cup-bearer,

and after that is done it is the duty of the lord of the feast to give the end of the towel to some fit person to hold, until all the principal guests shall have washed according to their degree, in basins prepared for them.

Directions for the arrangement of the company follow, and after the adjustment of so important a point, the sewer is to go to the dresser, and then take assay of every dish: "he next gives to the stewards and the cooks to eat of all porridges, mustardes and other sauces," taking the assay we are told, "with cornets of trenchers of his own cutting, and that is thus. He taketh a cornet of bread in his hand, and toucheth three parts of the dish, and maketh a florishe over it, and giveth it to the aforenamed persons to eate. And of every stewed meat, rosted, boyled, or broyled, being fish or flesh, he cutteth a little thereof, and if it be baked meat closed, unclose it, and take assay thereof as ye do of sauces, and that is with cornets of bread, and so with all other meates, as custards, tarts and jelly, and other such like." The ministers of the church in the interim to be employed, "after the old custom, in singing some proper or godly carol."

The whole of this long ceremony of tasting the dishes is to be gone over again, for the marshal and the steward are to usher in the course, "making obeisance in the midst of the hall, and before the high table," after which it is the duty of the marshal to stand still, while the sewer kneels upon his knee, beside the carver, as the latter receives the dishes and uncovers them. Then the carver of all potages and sauces, is to take assay with a cornet of trencher

CHAP. VII.

bread of his own cutting, touching three different parts of the dish, and making a flourish over it, and giving the bread to the sewer, and the bearer of the dish, who are to eat it kneeling. The carver is instructed to take assay of stewed, broiled, fried, or roast meats, be they flesh or fish, cutting a part of each with a broad knife, and if it should be any sort of fowl, taking a slice from the outside of the leg or wing, the baked meats if they should be enclosed in paste, are to be uncovered and a piece of bread dipped in the gravy and given to the bearer; and a small portion is to be cut from all "subtelties, marchpanes or leeches." "In the mean time," continues our author, "the marshal goeth to the buttery to see the covered cup be right served, and giveth to the butler his assay, and delivereth to the cup bearer the cup of estate; and when the cup bearer cometh to the table, after his obeisance, he kneeleth on his knee and putteth forth three or four drops of ale into the inside of the cover of the cup and suppes it for his assay. Then he sets the cup beside the lord, and covereth it, and then all the table is served with like. Mark when the first rost meate, being fish or flesh is broken, then the cup bearer goeth to the seller, and when the cup bearer cometh to the table he useth himself as afore. The usher must see for the order of the hall, and every place where his office doth lie. The sewer must see that there want no sauces for any dish of his kind. Then the carver must see that the lords have no foule trenchers, but kepe them clean or else change them, and so see that he have a good eye and a quick hand, and not to be over hastie; then carve the lord of every dish a

little, as they be set in by the hand of the sewer, till the second course be ready, and see that ye have a good countenance although anything do quayle in your hands. When the lords drinketh, be it wine or ale, the cup bearer holdeth the cover under the cup for the estate thereof, or else he maketh a profer of estate so far as he may reach with his arm, not offending the sewer in any wise. And when the last dish of the first course is set in, the sewer goeth to the dresser, and as he did in the first course, so he must do at the second course in every point, as touching the assay with other things, and when he is ready the ministers of the church do sing solemnly. Then the marshal and the sewer goeth together to the high table before the course. Then the marshal standeth still and the sewer kneeleth on his knee, and delyvereth every dish to the carver as he did in the first course. All this done see the lorde have no foule trenchers, but give him clean, and see he want no bread, and so carve on to the last dish."*

The ceremonies to be observed in clearing the tables after the repast shall be concluded, are equally tedious without being so entertaining as those quoted above; the reader therefore may be spared the dull detail.

From the description of the plate belonging to Henry VI. and that of the Earl of Warwick and Sir John Fastolfe already given, together with the extracts which will appear from the wills of the times, some idea may be formed of the shining splendour of the gold and silver ornaments which graced the banquets of great men. These glittering uten-

* Leland's Collection, vol. vi.

CHAP. VII.

sils were richly and curiously carved by goldsmiths, fast rising to the summit of their art, men whose delicate touches impelled the genius of Benvenuto Cellini to those master strokes which have immortalized his name; but notwithstanding the prodigality of magnificence displayed in the decorations of the table, the noble guests were obliged to dip their fingers into the dishes, forks being a much later invention.

Dancing composed one of the chief amusements of the court of Edward IV. it was a pastime easily revived even in the most brief season of peace, and the civil wars had been less unfavourable to the gay revel of a ball room than to the solemn dramatic representations which formed a principal feature in the festivities of preceding reigns. The clerks' company and the scholars of St. Paul's school, were usually the authors and the actors of the mysteries and moralities which ushered the regular drama into England. They are recorded to have performed for three days successively before Richard II. and his court at Clerkenwell; and in 1378 they presented a petition to that monarch, praying him to prohibit some inexpert people from representing the histories of the Old Testament to the prejudice of the said clergy, who had been at a vast expense to get up the same entertainment at Christmas.* At the accession of Henry IV. there was a great play enacted of matter from the creation of the world, which was even a more tedious infliction than the former, being of eight days' continuance. The chief part of the nobility attended the performance, but no mention is made of the king's presence, who probably spared

* Stow.

himself the painful constraint of assuming the semblance of pleasure at the loyal efforts of his subjects for his amusement. * The performers, whose usurpation of the churchman's office was the subject of ecclesiastical complaint, were composed of itinerant bands who strolled from castle to castle and village to village, exhibiting specimens of their art to all classes of persons. These wandering actors were of higher antiquity than their clerical rivals, and the large sums of money which rewarded their efforts seduced the monks to commence so lucrative an occupation upon their own account, and denouncing the representation of profane stories as licentious and immoral, introduced and monopolized all the subjects selected from the sacred writings, and by this artful expedient made a considerable addition to the enormous revenues of the church. The ecclesiastical plays were usually performed in churches or chapels, upon temporary scaffolds erected for that purpose; and in order to render the entertainment more popular and diverting, his satanic majesty, attended by a grotesque train of inferior imps, was made to enact the part of the clown or merry andrew, and by his gibbering squeaks, buffetings, and strange contortions, frequently convulsed the audience with laughter.

In the troublesome period which succeeded the breaking out of the civil wars, scenic exhibitions in the metropolis were confined to the pageants which the taste of the city companies provided for the entertainment of royalty in the public streets, where the cardinal virtues walked in procession, accom-

* Strutt.

CHAP. VII.

panied by angels: and pagan heroes, heathen gods, and scriptural characters, were mingled together in strange yet gay confusion. Robin Hood and his fair maid Marian, with their train of merry archers, clad in the forest garb, winding their bugle horns and "wilde or selvage men," quaintly attired in hairy suits, cinctured around the waist, and crowned with green leaves, were favourite personages in these stately shows. Upon Lord Mayor's Day wicker-work giants, and paste-board dragons were added; each company bore the emblems of their art before them, and hobby-horses, morrice dancers, and mummers, filled up the rude yet gaudy and picturesque spectacle.

Sir John Norman, a draper, and chief magistrate in the reign of Henry VI. introduced the water procession in his mayoralty, an improvement which so much delighted the citizens that they composed and sung a ballad in his honour, beginning with "Row thy boat, Norman!"* But unquestionably no amusement invented in these or any succeeding ages ever equalled the splendour and animation of the tournament. "At the celebration of these pastimes," says Strutt, "the lists were superbly decorated and surrounded by the pavilions belonging to the champions, ornamented with their arms, banners, and banerolls; the scaffolds for the reception of the nobility of both sexes who came as spectators, and those especially appointed for the royal family, were hung with tapestry and embroideries of gold and silver; every person on such occasions appeared to the greatest advantage, decked in sumptuous array,

* Stow.

and every part of the field presented to the eye a rich display of magnificence; we may also add the splendid appearance of the knights engaged in the sports; themselves and their horses most gorgeously arrayed, as well as their esquires and pages, together with the minstrels and heralds, who superintended the ceremonies, all of them being clothed in costly and glittering apparel. Such a show of pomp, where wealth, beauty, and grandeur, were concentred as it were in one focus, must altogether have formed a wonderful spectacle, and made a strong impression on the mind, which was not a little heightened by the cries of the heralds, the clangor of the trumpets, the clashing of the arms, the rushing together of the combatants, and the shouts of beholders; hence the popularity of these exhibitions may be easily accounted for.

"The tournament and the just, and especially the latter, afforded to those who were engaged in them an opportunity of appearing before the ladies to the greatest advantage; they might at once display their taste and opulence by the costliness and elegance of their apparel, and their prowess as soldiers; therefore these pastimes became fashionable among the nobility, and probably for the same reason they were prohibited to the commoners."

The descriptions which have been preserved of the meeting at Gosford Green, near Coventry, between the Dukes of Hereford and Norfolk, in the reign of Richard II. afford a lively idea of the magnificence which was heaped together upon these occasions; each combatant strove to outshine the other in the splendour of his trappings. Boling-

CHAP. VII.

broke sent to the armourers of Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, for his coat of mail; and Norfolk procured his brilliant habiliments from Germany; both appeared at the lists accompanied by their friends and relations, and attended by a numerous train richly attired in silk embroidered with silver, and bearing staffs in their hands to keep the crowd in order.

Hereford, as the challenger, rode first to the barriers, mounted on a white courser barbed with green and blue velvet, embroidered with golden swans and antelopes, himself completely armed at all points, and bearing a drawn sword in his hand. Having answered the questions of the heralds, he sheathed his sword, drew his beaver down, dismounted, and seated himself on a chair of green velvet, placed within a traverse of green and blue velvet at one end of the lists. Richard soon after made his appearance, surrounded by his whole court, glittering in jewels and cloth of gold, the Earl of St. Paul, who came from France for the express purpose of witnessing the combat, and a guard of ten thousand men. The heralds proclaimed the presence of the Duke of Hereford, and Norfolk instantly rode forward completely armed, with his horse covered with crimson velvet, embroidered with silver lions and mulberry trees, and whilst the preliminary ceremonies were performing by the earl marshal, seated himself in a chair of crimson velvet, canopied with red and white damask.

The laws of the tournament were regulated according to the pleasure of either of those by whom the sport was instituted, or by the commissioners

appointed to settle all preliminaries, and to preside at the field; and consequently, although due regard was always paid to ancient customs, the observances varied as fashion or convenience dictated. The particular exploits which should be deemed worthy of the prizes were expressly stated, and the nature and value of the prizes declared: and ample instructions being given to the heralds who proclaimed the tournament, all the combatants were made acquainted with the rules which they were bound to obey, upon pain of forfeiting their privileges, and exclusion from the sports. Dr. Meyrick tells us, that it was not for a considerable period subsequent to the establishment of these martial exercises, that the lists and barriers, afterwards so universal, were erected. The knights originally assembled at the four angles of an open plain, and ran in parties against each other. The first lists consisted of cords stretched before the different companies previous to the commencement of the tournament, and the imminent danger attending these pastimes occasioned the invention of the double lists, first adopted in France, which, besides the cord above-mentioned, consisted of a paling put up in the centre, so that the knights might run from one end to the other without coming in contact except with their lances.

Gorgeous pavilions were erected for the combatants, and all those who intended to engage in the sports were required to display their arms at their respective stations, in order that the judges of the field might exercise their right to examine them, and reject or approve as they conformed to the laws previously established. This ceremony accomplished,

CHAP. VII.

the arms were restored, and the heralds nailed up the shield of each challenger in front of his pavilion, and planted his banner on the parade before it, afterwards performing the same office to the acceptors. All the arrangements being completed, the kings-at-arms and heralds made the circuit of the field, crying aloud, "*A l'achevier Chevalier, &c.*" (To achievement, knights and esquires, to achievement.) The knights then issued from their pavilions, and rushed to the sport, which they continued or abandoned at the direction of the judges appointed to preside; encouraged to proceed by the cry of "*Laisser les aler.*" (Let them go on:) or stayed by the command, "*Ployer vos baniers,*" the signal for the conclusion of the tournament. The banners were rolled up, and the knights and esquires permitted to retire, the distribution of the prizes being almost invariably reserved to a future occasion. Every knight and esquire was allowed to have a page armed within the lists, but divested of all offensive weapons, to attend upon him, and give him such assistance in adjusting his cumbrous accoutrements as he might require: three serviteurs were afterwards admitted for the same purpose. The knight was also allowed to unhelm himself at pleasure, should he sustain inconvenience from the heat, and the courteous laws of the tournament secured him from molestation while in this defenceless situation. The kings-at-arms and heralds, we are informed by the author* who has so ably illustrated the usages of ancient times, were privileged to wear the blazon of arms of those by whom the sport was instituted;

* Meyrick in his admirable treatise upon ancient armour.

besides which, they were entitled to six ells of scarlet cloth as their fee, and had all their expenses defrayed during the continuation of the tournament. By the law of arms they had a right to the helmet of every knight when he made his first essay in the field, which became their perquisite as soon as the sports concluded. They also claimed six crowns each as nail money for affixing the blazon of arms to the pavilions. The kings-at-arms held the banners of the two chief barons on the day of the tournament, the heralds those of their confederates, according to the respective rank of each.

A manuscript preserved in the Harleian collection presents us with a detailed account of the regulations observed at tournaments in the reign of Edward IV., in whose time, although the gallant Rivers achieved exploits worthy of chivalry's brightest day, we must look in vain for the glorious fields recorded in the annals of his predecessors. Monstrelet* observes, that the accomplished Wydeville in his combat with the bastard of Burgundy, "performed his deed of arms greatly to his credit; but it did not last long, for, as it was done to please the King of England, he would not suffer the combat to continue any time, so that it was rather for amusement." However, the tilt still maintained its ground as a fashionable exercise, and as the manner of conducting tournaments in the reign of Edward IV. was derived from the best authenticated laws of older times, those who are interested in the martial sports of former ages may derive pleasure from the perusal of an extract from the document above-mentioned,

* Johnes' Translation, vol. x.

CHAP. VII.

which is entitled, *" Ordinances, statutes, and rules made by John Tiptoft earl of Worcester, constable of England, by the king's commandement at Windsor, the twenty-ninth of May, anno sixto Edwardi quarti, to be observed and kepte in all manner of jouste of peers royal within the realme of England, referring alwayes to the queene and to the ladyes present the attrebution and gift of the prize, after the manner and forme accustomed to be attributed for their demerits, according to the articles ensuinge:

" First, whoso breaketh most spears as they ought to be broken shall have the prize.

" He that or whoso hitteth iij times in the syghte of the healme shall have the prize.

" Whoso meteth two times cornell to cornell shall have the prize.

" Whoso beareth a man downe with stroke of spear shall have the prize.

" Here followeth wherefore the prize shall be lost:

" Who stryketh a horse shall have no prize.

" Who hitteth the toyle iij times shall have no prize.

" Here followeth how spears shall be allowed * * * *

" For the prize to be given:

" Whoso beareth a man downe from his sadle or pulleth him to the earth horse and manne, shall have the prize before him that stryketh cornell to cornell ij times.

" He that stryketh the cornell ij times shall have the prize before him that stryketh the syghte ij times.

* MSS. Ashmole, 765, MS. Bibl. Harleian, 1776, printed by Strutt and Dallaway.

"He that stryketh the syghte iij times, shall have the prize before hym that breaketh most staves or spears.

"If there be any man that fortuneth in this wyse whych shall be deemed longest to have bidden the field helmed, and to have done the fairest course, and to have given the greatest strokes, who have holpen himself best with his spear, he shall have the prize.

"Two blowes at the passage and tenne at the joining, more or lesse as they make it all grypes, shockes and fowle play forbidden. After antient order and honor of armes, it is not lawful for anie man to do the deedes of feates of armes in any just royale within the realme of England except he be well known unto the king of armes of the province, to be a gentleman of arms, bloud, and descent.

"All such gentlemen as determine to be challengers of any just or tournay, shall make their humble request to the king's majestie for his gracious licence that they may make their chalenge according to the laws of armes, at such time and place as his grace shall think meet. And the king's licence obtained, the gentlemen challengers shall call unto them the king at armes in whose province the tournay is to be done, and with his determination agree for the proclamation by him to be made after the most antientest laws of armes."

"Persons of rank," says Strutt, "were taught in their childhood to relish such exercises as were of a martial nature, and the very toys that were put into their hands as playthings were calculated to bias the mind in their favour." A plate in this au-

CHAP. VII.

thor's interesting work upon the sports and pastimes of the people of England exhibits two views of a knight on horseback completely equipped for the just, taken from a small brass figure, the production of the fifteenth century, which ran upon wheels, and was so constructed as to afford a mimic representation of the principal incidents of the tilt: the knight being moveable and liable to be unhorsed by the shock of a similar antagonist, each being violently impelled towards the other by means of a cord fastened in front of the apparatus, and the interest which every class of persons took in these warlike amusements is strikingly manifested by the spirited representations of chivalric sports continually occurring in the illumination of MSS, a favourite and elegant art belonging to this age. Yet even at the period of which we now treat, the tournament was susceptible of some decay. Caxton complains of the diminution of the warriors' ardour for this noble exercise. "O, ye knyghtes of Englonde," he exclaims, "where is the custome and noble usage of chyvalrie that was used in those days? What do ye now but go to the baynes and play at dyse? And some not well advysed, use not honest and good rule against all ordre of knyghthode. Leve this! leve it! and read the noble volumes of Sangreal, of Lancelot, of Galehad, of Trystram, of Perce-Forest, of Percyvale, of Gawayne, and many moe. I would demande a question if it should not displease: how many knyghtes ben ther now in Englonde that have th'use and th'exercice of a knyghte? That is to wyte, that he knoweth his horse and he him." The grandeur of the tournament and the eager delight

which it afforded to the warlike spirits of the nation, appeared in its highest and most animating degree during the long and brilliant interval which elapsed from the accession of Richard I. to the loss of France under Henry VI. From this time notwithstanding many dazzling and noble displays of knightly skill, they were evidently in a languishing state, and although even down to the field of gold, where Henry VIII. and the Emperor Charles appeared attended by all the continental chivalry, attempts were made to revive and emulate the glories of former days, there was not a single nobleman after the decease of Richard Beauchamp Earl of Warwick, in the year 1439, who participated in the excessive attachment to the just, manifested by Roger Mortimer, Sir Thomas Chandos, Sir John Holand, and others, who like the errant knights of old rode over Christendom seeking for antagonists, challenging the whole world to feats of arms, and continually improving their warlike amusements by the invention of some new and courteous device. The period to which we refer was the golden age of chivalry in England, unless we admit of the exploits of King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table as genuine adventures. During the first two hundred years which followed the Norman conquest, the just was disgraced by the brutal ardour of the combatants. *Weever informs us that Gilbert Earl of Pembroke and Marshal of England, in 1241, proclaimed a tournament at Hertford in scorn of the king's authority, whereby such sports were forbidden, in which he was killed. "These kind of justs and tournaments," continues our author, "were brought

* Funeral Monuments.

CHAP. VII.

in with King Stephen, and practised in many places in England in such an outrageous manner, and with such slaughter of gentlemen, that to suppress so heathenish a disport, it was decreed by parliament that whosoever therein were slain, should want christian burial and their heirs disinherited."

*The lower orders, excluded from the tournament, had recourse to the exercise of the quintain, which was not prohibited to any class of the people, and which from the earliest times had been in use for the purpose of training warriors to deeds of arms. It was practised both on horseback and on foot, on land and on the water, and consisted of the dexterous management of a staff or spear, whilst urged at full speed against a shield attached to a pole, made fast to a boat, or planted in the earth. If the blow did not strike the mark exactly in the centre, very disastrous consequences followed the tyro's awkward attempt. Failure on the river was attended by immediate precipitation into the flood, and much merriment was occasioned on shore by a simple piece of mechanism, which was infallibly set in motion to the disgrace and damage of the unsuccessful candidate whenever he aimed an awkward stroke. To these amusements were added the tricks of jugglers, the performances of wandering bands of minstrels, and the various disguisings, which at Christmas and other festivals rendered every house, from the king's palace to the yeoman's cottage, the scene of a rude species of carnival.

Fantastic vizors, chiefly shaped into the resemblance of the heads of beasts, frequently crowned

* Strutt.

with horns or surmounted by high pointed caps, and buckram tunics grotesquely painted with coloured devices, formed the usual costume of the masqueraders. The wardrobe rolls of Edward III. contain a list of eighty dresses of this description, and the illuminated manuscripts before mentioned, give numerous specimens of odd looking figures dancing in this strange and droll attire. The buckram tunics were of divers colours, and forty-two visors are also enumerated in the above-named record, "of various similitudes, that is, fourteen of the faces of women, fourteen of the faces of men with beards, fourteen heads of angels made of silver, twenty-eight crests, fourteen mantles embroidered with heads of dragons, fourteen white tunics wrought with heads and wings of peacocks, fourteen tunics of English linen painted, and as many tunics embroidered with stars of gold and silver."

Stow in his survey of London has quoted Fitzstephen's description of the amusements of the people of England, assuring us that the "like exercises" were continued to his own time. "London," says the latter writer, "for the shewes upon theaters and comicall pastimes hath holy playes, representations of miracles, which holy confessors have wrought; or representations of torments, wherein the constancy of martyrs appeared. Every yeere also on Shrove Tuesday (that we may beginne with children's sports seeing we have all been children) the schoole-boyes doe bring cockes of the game to their master, and all the forenoon they delight themselves with cock fighting. After dinner all the youths goe into the fields to play at the ball. The scholars of

CHAP. VII.

every school have their ball or bastion in their hands: the ancient and wealthy men of the citie come forth on horsebacke to see the sport of the young men, and to take part of the pleasure in beholding their agility. Every Friday in Lent a fresh company of young men comes into the field on horsebacke, and the best horsemen conduct the rest. Then march forth the citizens' sonnes, and other young men with disarmed lances and shields, and then they practise feats of warre. Many courtiers likewise, when the king lyeth neere, and attendants on noble-men, doe repaire to these exercises, and while the hope of victory doth inflame their mindes, they shew by good proofe how serviceable they would be in martial affaires. In Easter holydays they fight battels on the water. A shield is hanged upon a pole, fixed in the midst of the streeme: a boat is prepared without oares, to be carried by violence of the water, and in the fore part thereof standeth a young man, ready to give charge upon the shield with his launce. If so be he breake his launce against the shield, and doth not fall, he is thought to have performed a worthy deede. If so bee without breaking his launce, he runneth strongly against the shield, down he falleth into the water; for the boat is violently forced with the tide; but on each side of the shield ride two boats, furnished with young men, which recover him that falleth as soon as they may. Upon the bridge, wharfes, and houses by the river side, stand great numbers to see and laugh thereat. In the holy daies all the summer, the youths are exercised in leaping, dancing, shooting, wrestling, casting the stone, and prac-

tising their shields; the maidens trip with their timbrels, and dance as long as they can see. In winter every holiday before dinner, the bores prepared for brawne are set to fight, or els buls or beares are baited. When the greate fenne or moore which watereth the wals of the citie on the north side is frozen, many young men play upon the ice; some striding as wide as they may, do slide swiftly; others make themselves seats of ice, as great as mill-stones, one sits down, many, hand in hand, doe draw him, and one slipping on a sudden, all fall together. Some tye bones to their feet, and under their heeles, and shoving themselves by a little piked staff, doe slide as swiftly as a bird flyeth in the ayre, or an arrow oute of a crosse-bow. Sometimes two run together with a pole, and hitting one the other, either one or both doe fall, not without hurt; some breake their armes, some their legs: but youth (desirous of glory in this sort) exercises itself against the time of warre. Many of the citizens doe delight themselves in hawkes and hounds, for they have liberty of hunting in Middlesex, Hertfordshire, all Chiltron, and in Kent to the water of Cray." To this account Stow adds some very entertaining particulars. "The ball," observes our author, "is used by noblemen and gentlemen in tennis courts, and by people of the meaner sort in open field or street. The marching forth of citizens' sons, and other young men on horsebacke, with disarmed lances and shields, there to practise feats of warre, man against man, hath long since been left off, but in their citie they have used on horsebacke to run at a dead mark called a quinton. This exercise of running at the

CHAP. VII.

quinton, was practised by the youthful citizens, as well in summer as in winter, namely in the feast of Christmas. I have seen a quinton set upon Cornhill, by the Leaden-hall, when the attendants of the lords of merry disports have runne, and made great pastime; for he that hit not the broad end of the quinton, was of all men laughed to scorn; and he that hit it full, if he rode not the faster, had a sound blowe in his necke with a bag full of sand, hanged on the other end. I have also in the summer season seen some upon the river of Thames, rowed in wherries, with staves in their hands, flat at the fore-end, running one against another, and for the most part, one or both overthrown and well ducked.

"On the holidays in the summer, the youth of this citie have in the field exercised themselves, in leaping, dancing, shooting, wrestling, casting of the stone or ball, &c. The youth of this citie also have used on holidays, after evening prayer, at their masters' doores to exercise their wasters at Bucklers: and the maidens, one of them playing on a timbril, in syght of their masters and dames, to dance for garlands, hanged thwart the streets; which open pastimes in my youth, being now suppressed, worser practices within doors are to be feared. As for the baiting of buls and beares, they are to this day much frequented, namely in Beargardens, on the Bankside, wherein be prepared scaffolds for beholders to stand upon. Sliding on the ice is now but children's play; but in hawking and hunting many grave citizens at this present have great delight, and do rather want leisure than good-will to follow it." Speaking of the change in dramatic representations which had taken

place in the sixteenth century, and the performances which had superseded in his days the mysteries of moralities of old, Stow says: "Of late time, instead of those stage plays, have been used comedies, tragedies, interludes, and histories, both true and fained; for the acting whereof certain publike places have been erected. Also cockes of the game are yet cherished by divers men for their pleasure, much money being laid on their heads when they fight in pits, whereof some be costly, made for that purpose." Stow also records many triumphant shows devised and conducted at the expence of the citizens of London, in honour of the royal family: one of the most splendid occurred in the year 1377, "made," says the historian, "for disport of the young Prince Richard, sonne to the Black Prince, at the feast of Christmas, and in this manner."

On the Sunday before Candlemas in the night, one hundred and thirty citizens, disguised and well horsed, in a mummery, with sound of trumpets, sackbuts, cornets, shalmes, and other minstrels, and innumerable torch lights of wax, rode from Newgate through Cheap, over the bridge, through Southwark, and so to Kennington beside Lambeth where the young prince remained with his mother, and the Duke of Lancaster, his uncle, the Earls of Cambridge, Hertford, Warwick, and Suffolk, with divers other lords. In the first rank did ride forty-eight in the likeness and habit of esquires, two and two together, clothed in red coats, and gowns of say or sandell, with comely visors on their faces. After them came riding forty-eight knights in the same livery of colour and stuff. Then followed one richly arrayed,

CHAP. VII.

like an emperor; and after him some distance, one stately tyred like a pope, who was followed by twenty-four cardinals; and after them eight or ten with black visors, not amiable, as if they had been legates from some foreign prince," an odd insinuation, implying that his holiness and the conclave were not without suspicion of having some dealings with the powers of darkness. "These maskers," continues our author, "after they had entered the mannor of Kennington, alighted from their horses, and entered the hall on foot; which done, the prince, his mother, and the lords, came out of the chamber into the hall, whom the mummers did salute, shewing by a paire of dice on the table their desire to play with the young prince; which they so handled, that the prince did alwaies winne when he cast at them. Then the mummers set to the prince three jewels, one after another; which were a bowle of gold, a cup of gold, and a ring of gold, which the prince wonne at three casts. Then they set to the prince's mother, the duke, the earls, and other lords, to every one a ring of gold, which they also did winne. After which they were feasted and the musicke sounded, the prince and the lords danced on the one part with the mummers, who did also dance, which jollity being ended, they were again made to drinke, and then departed in order as they came. The like was to Henry the fourth, in the second of his reign; he then keeping his Christmas at Eltham, twelve aldermen of London and their sonnes, rode in a mumming and had great thanks. Thus much," adds our author, "for sportfull shows and triumphs may suffice. Now for sports and pastimes yearly used.

First in the feast of Christmas, there was in the king's house, wheresoever he was lodged, a lord of misrule, or master of merry disports, and the like had ye in the house of every nobleman of honour, or good worship, were he spirituall or temporall. Among the which the maior of London, and either of the sheriffes, had their several lords of misrule, ever contending, without quarrel or offence, who should make the rarest pastimes to delight the beholders. These lords beginning their rule at Alhallow eve, continued the same till the morrow after the feast of the purification, commonly called Candlemas day: in all which space, there were fine and subtil disguisings, maskes and mummeries, with playing at cards for counters, nayles and points in every house, more for pastime than for gaine.

"Against the feast of Christmas every man's house, as also the parish churches, were decked with holme, ivie, bayes, and whatever the season of the yeare afforded to be greene: the conduits and standards in the streets were likewise garnished. Among the which I read that in the yeare 1444 by tempest of thunder and lightning, on the first of February at night, Paul's steeple was fired, but with great labour quenched: and toward the morning of Candlemas day at the Leaden-hall in Cornhill, a standard of tree being set up in the midst of the pavement fast in the ground, nayled full of holie and ivie, for disport of Christmas to the people, was torne up and cast down by the malignant spirit, as was thought, and the stones of the pavement all about were cast in the streets, and into divers houses, so that the people were sore agast at the great tempests. In the week

CHAP. VII.

before Easter had yee great shewes made, for the fetching in of a twisted tree, or with, as they termed it out of the woods, into the king's house, and the like into every man's house of honour and worship. In the moneth of May, namely on May-day in the morning, every man, excepte impediment, woulde walke into the sweet meddows and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birdes praising God in their kind. I find also that in the moneth of May the citizens of London, of all estates, lightly in every parish, or sometimes two or three parishes joyning together, had their several Mayings, and did fetch in May poles, with divers warlike shews, with good archers, morice dancers, and other devices for pastime all the day long; and towards the evening they had stage plaies and bonfires in the streets. Of these Mayings we read, in the reign of Henry the Sixth, that the aldermen and sheriffs of London being on May-day at the Bishop of London's wood in the parish of Stebunheath, and having there a worshipful dinner for themselves and other commers, Lydgate the poet, that was a monk of Bury, sent to them by a pursuivant a joyful commendation of that season, containing sixteen staves in meeter royal, beginning thus,

"Mighty Flora, Goddesse of fresh flowers,
Which clothed hath the soyle in lusty greene,
Made buds to spring, with her sweet showers,
By influence of the sun-shine,
To doe pleasure of intent full cleane,
Unto the states which now sit here,
Hath for dower sent her owne daughter deer.

Making the vertue, that dured in the root,
Called the vertue, the vertue vegetable,
For to transcend most wholesome and most soote,
Into the top this season so agreeable:
The balmy liquor is so commendable
That it rejoyceth with his fresh moisture,
Man, beast, and fowle, and every creature."

"In the months of June and July, on the vigils of festival dayes, and on the same festival dayes in the evenings after the sun setting, there were usually made bone-fires in the streets, every man bestowing wood or labour towards them. The wealthier sort also before their doors neare to the said bone-fires, would set out tables on the vigils furnished with sweete bread and good drinke, and on the festival dayes with meates and drinkes plentifully, whereunto they would invite their neighbours and passengers also to sit, and be merry with them with great familiarity, praising God for his benefits bestowed on them. These were called bone-fires as well of amity amongst neighbours, that being before at controversie, were there by the labour of others reconciled, and made of bitter enemies loving friends; as also for the vertue that a great fire hath to purify infected ayre. On the vigill of Saint John Baptist, and on Saint Peter and Saint Paul the apostles, every man's doore being shaded with green birch, long fennel, Saint John's wort, orpies, white lilies, and such like, garnished upon with garlands of beautiful flowers, had also lamps of glasse, with oyle burning in them all the night; some hung out branches of iron curiously wrought, containing hundreds of lamps lighted at once, which made a goodly shew, namely in Fish-street, Thames-street, &c.

CHAP. VII.

Then had ye besides the standing watches, all in bright harnesse, in every ward and street of this city and suburbs, a marching watch, that passed through the principal streets thereof, to wit, from the little conduit by Paul's gate, through West-chepe, by the stocks, through Corn-hill, by Leaden-hall to Aldgate, then back down Fen church Street, by Grasse church, about Grasse church Conduit, and up Grasse church Street into Corn-hill, and through it into West chepe again, and so broke up. The whole way ordered for this marching watch extended to three thousand two hundred taylor's yards of assize, for the furniture whereof with lights, there were appointed seven hundred cressets, five hundred of them being found by the companies, the other two hundred by the chamber of London. Besides the which lights, every constable in London, in number more than two hundred and forty, had his cresset. The charge for every cresset was in light two shillings and fourpence, and every cresset had two men, one to beare or hold it, another to beare a bag with light and to serve it: so that the poore men pertaining to the cressets, taking wages, besides that every one had a strawen hat, with a badge painted, and his breakfast in the morning, amounted in number to almost two thousand. The marching watch contained two thousand men, part of them being old souldiers of skill, to bee captaines, lieutenants, sergeants, corporals, &c. wifflers, drummers, and fifes, standard, and ensign bearers, sword-players, trumpeters, on horse-back, demi-launces on greate horses, gunners with hand guns, or halfe-hakes, archers in coats of white fustian, signed on

the brest and backe with the arms of the city, their bowes bent in their hands, with sheefes of arrowes by their sides, pikemen in bright corslets, burganets, &c. Holbards the like, billmen in almaine rivets, and aprons of mail in great numbers.

"There were also divers pageants, morris dancers, constables, the one halfe which was an hundred and twenty on Saint John's eve, and the other halfe on Saint Peter's eve, in bright harnesse, some overgilt, and every one a fornet of scarlet thereupon, and a chain of gold, his henchman following him, his minstrels before him, all in a livery of worsted or say jackets, party coloured, the maior himselfe well mounted on horse-backe, the sword-bearer before him in faire armour, well mounted also, the maior's footmen, and the like torch bearers about him, henchmen twain, upon great stirring horses following him. The sheriffes watches came one after the other in like order, but not so large in number as the maior's: for where the maior had besides his giant three pageants, each of the sheriffes had besides their giants but two pageants; each their morris dance, and one henchman, their officers in jackets of worsted, or say, party coloured, differing from the maiors, and each from other, but having harnessed men a great many. This Midsummer watch was thus accustomed yearly, time out of mind, until the year 1539." At which period we are informed that the citizens, in order to please their magnificent monarch, Henry VIII. so far surpassed the ancient pomp and pageanty, that the king "considering the great charges" of so costly a cavalcade, after the muster had been made on the eighth of May, for-

CHAP. VII.

bade the procession, and though there were several subsequent attempts to revive the old custom of the watch they were unsuccessful.

"In the month of August," says Stow, continuing his account of the amusements of the metropolis, "about the feast of Saint Bartholomew, the Apostle, before the Lord Maior, Aldermen, and Sheriffes of London, placed in a large tent, neare unto Clerkenwell, of old time were divers days spent in the pastime of wrestling, where the officers of the city, namely the sheriffes, sergeants, and yeomen, the porters of the king's beame, or weigh house (now no such men), and other of the city were challengers of all men in the suburbs, to wrestle for games appointed. And on other days before the said maior, aldermen, and sheriffes, in Finsbury field, to shoot the standard, broad arrow, and flight, for games. But now of late yeares the wrestling is only practised on Saint Bartholomew's Day, in the afternoon, and the shooting some three or four dayes after in one afternoon and no more. What should I speak of the ancient daily exercises in the long bow by citizens of this city, now almost cleane left off and forsaken, I over passe it: for by the meanes of closing in of common grounds, our archers for want of room to shoot abroad, creepe into bowling-alleys, and ordinarie dicing-houses, nearer home, where they have roome enough to hazard their unlawful games, and there I leave them to take their pleasures." Another old writer like Stow deeply lamenting the degeneracy of his contemporaries, and making comparisons much to their disadvantage, between their amusements and the

more manly exercises of the warlike spirits of Henry VI. and Edward IV. exclaims while uttering a bitter condemnation of the bowling-alleys, "Oh, what a wonderful change is this! our wrestling at armes is turned to wallowing in ladies laps, our courage to cowardice, our running to royot, our bowes into bowles, and our darts into dishes."*

The love of gaming which pervaded all ages, is manifested by the numerous statutes prohibiting the indulgence of so ruinous a vice; the common people preferred these popular games to the employment of their leisure hours, to the practice of archery, and the government with a view to suppress new and mischievous innovations, and to revive the emulation so useful in preparing soldiers for the field, in the reign of Edward IV. published the following ordinance. "Though by the laws of this land, no man shall play at unlawful games, as coits, footballs, and the like games, but that every able bodied man shall daily practice archery, because the defence of the kingdom depends on archers; yet notwithstanding these laws, many evil disposed persons, of all ranks, play at those and at other newly invented games, called cloits, kayles, half-bowl, handin-handout, and queche borde."

The passion for strange sights which still prevails had a very early origin in England; its continental neighbours also participated in the thirst for all that was extraordinary and uncommon. Monstrelet tells us, in his chronicle, of a mis-shapen monster, who traversed various countries, and made large sums of money by the exhibition of horrible deformities.

* Stephen Gosson.

CHAP. VII.

Shakespeare's satires upon the love of the marvellous evinced in his own times, would have applied to a much earlier period. Long before the production of his exquisite drama, there were numbers of holiday fools in England who would have given a piece of silver to see the painting of that strange fish, Caliban. In the Paston Letters there is an account of a Turkish dwarf, forty years old, not taller than the children of the describer, by whose vague manner of writing, his stature in these days cannot be ascertained, and this pigmy was considered a spectacle worthy of the curiosity of a monarch; he was brought to court, and presented to Edward IV., and after the interview, told the by-standers that he "hadde chyldren as hyghe and as lykely as the kyng hymselfe."

CHAPTER VIII.

Splendour of Household Furniture—of Dress and Ornaments—Extracts from various Wills—Weight of the Gold Chains—Offerings at Funerals—Dwellings of the Rich and of the Poor—Harrison's Account of the Manner of Building—Poverty of the Lower Classes—Hospitality of the Nobles—Neglect of Agriculture—State of Society—Feud between the Talbots and the Berkeleys—Battle at Nibly Green—Brutality of the Conqueror—Brawl between Edward's Servants and the City Watch—Indignity offered to the Lord Mayor—Aggressions of the Nobles—Treatment of Prisoners of War—An unnatural Son—Character of Lord Rivers—Printing established in England—Ignorance of the Age—Introduction of new offensive Weapons—Statutes for the Encouragement of Archery—Archers and Men-at-Arms—The Cross-bow—The Hand Cannon—Improvements in Fire Arms—Anecdote respecting Hungary Water—Different ancient warlike Implements—Inscriptions upon Swords—and upon Spurs—Architecture of the Fifteenth Century—Devastation occasioned by the Civil Wars—Price of Roses and Apples in the Time of Henry VII.—Monumental Remains—Blazoning of Arms—Badges of the House of York—and of the House of Lancaster—The Fox's Tail—Anecdotes concerning it—Cognizance of the Feather—Badges preserved on the Signs of Inns—Richard's White Boar—The Bear and the Ragged Staff—Oxford's Star—Origin of Supporters—Introduction of the Blazon of Arms by Richard I.—Coinage of England—Changes under different Monarchs—Improvements made by Henry VII.—Edward's Deference to the Church—Increase of Abuses—Feud between the different Orders of Friars—Fashionable Places of Burial—Edward's Religion—Infliction of Torture—Its Condemnation by Sir John Fortesque—Persecution of Sir Thomas Cooke—Infractions of

the Law—Number of Law Students—Opinion of Sir Matthew Hale—Privileges obtained by the House of Commons—Canvas of a Candidate for a Borough—Wages of the Members—Short Sessions—Rowlie's Poems—Hardynge's Poems—Origin of the Poet Laureate—Claim of Lord Rivers to a Place amid the Authors of Edward's Reign — his Preface — Poem of Lord Rivers — Dame Juliana Berners.

CHAP. VIII.

THE household furniture and the dress of the nobility of this period was exceedingly magnificent, and both were made the subject of testamentary bequests.* Robes of state were composed of satin velvet and cloth of gold, lined with costly furs and broidered with gems and goldsmith's work. The ladies wore their hair plaited with jewels, from which pendant drops, composed of precious stones of great value and size, hung upon their foreheads; their necklaces, chains, bracelets, and rosaries, were also extremely rich and beautiful, as we learn from the wills of the times. Elizabeth Lady Fitzhugh, in 1427, bequeathed to one of her daughters a chaplet of pearl with double roses, and to another a tyre with double roses of pearl. Eleanor Countess of Arundel, in 1455 gives to the Lady Eleanor Percy, her daughter, a "golden collar for her neck, with a jewel set with precious stones hanging thereat." We read likewise of "a gold ring set with a turquoise, a diamond and a ruby;" "a broche with a blue sapphire set in it shaped like a flower de luce," "a rich rose of diamonds and rubies," a "cheyne of gold with a cross of diamonds and pearls," with an infinite variety of other costly and elegant ornaments. Plate in immense abundance is continually men-

* Testamenta Vetusta.

tioned, consisting of silver basins and ewers, bowls, cruets, chargers, candlesticks and cups; spoons, goblets, spice plates, flagons and saltcellars, many of which are described as being curiously enamelled, or embellished with fine chased work. Sir Thomas Lyttleton, the celebrated judge and author, enumerates amid the bequests of his will a basin of silver bearing his arms in the midst, a silver ewer, "two great salt selers and a kover," weighing ninety-three ounces and a half, "a standing plaine gilt piece with a plaine gilt kover, weying twenty-four ounces and a half," six bowls of silver enamelled, a standing piece with kover, weying nineteen ounces and a half, "two pieces of silver, one covering another, a powder box of silver, a paxe borde, two cruetts and a sakering bell, all of silver." These are legacies to the testator's wife. The knight gives to his son and heir "a depe washing basin of silver weighing forty-one ounces, two salt selers of silver with a kover to oon of them weying thirty-one ounces and a half, with another piece all over gilt, in the midst of which be three eagles; also a lowe piece of silver with a kover embossed in the likeness of roses, weying twenty-nine ounces and a half, with a dozen of his best spoons." To his son Richard the knight bequeaths "two little gilt saltselers with a gilt kover to oon, one little standing piece with a gilt kover which hath at the foote a crown and another on the kover weighing twenty-two ounces; also a standyng gilt nutt," and the best dozen of the second sort of his spoons. To Thomas Littleton, another son, "two salt selers of silver weying twenty-seven ounces," a standing piece gilt, with the family arms in the midst,

CHAP. VIII.

"a boll of siluer embossed with round bosses outward, weying eleven ounces and three quarters," with a dozen spoons of the third sort, and a little flat piece of silver all over gilt. To Edward Littleton, the testator's godson, "a little standing goblet of silver with a kover to the same all over gilt," and to the chapel of Frambley a gilt chalice.

The tapestry hangings which covered the walls of the reception rooms in the houses of the nobility, were often of great value and very exquisite workmanship. Anne Duchess of Buckingham bequeaths the hangings of the chamber of antelopes to her son. There are others mentioned, worked with armorial bearings; and a set in the will of Thomas Howard, the second Duke of Norfolk, is described as containing the story of Hercules. Nothing could exceed the gorgeousness of the beds. We read of the curtains and other coverings being composed of the most superb materials and enriched with curious needlework. The princess Joan left to her son Richard II. a new bed of red velvet embroidered in ostrich feathers and leopards' heads of gold; and to the Earl of Kent, another of red camak paled with red and rays of gold. Joan Beauchamp, lady of Bergavenny, was possessed of beds canopied with cloth of gold wrought with leopards, and of black and red silk embroidered with woodbine flowers of silver. Coverlets were furred with minever and worked in various devices and coats of arms. Amid the bequests of John of Ghent are a large bed of black velvet embroidered with fetterlocks and garters, a piece of arras, a present from the Duke of Burgundy, a chain of gold, which was even then an

antique, being "after the old manner with the name of God in each part," a present to the duke from his mother Queen Philippa, consort of Edward III., a bed of blue silk with eagles displayed, and a silk bed to his grandson Henry V. There are also rings, collars, diamonds, rubies, and a vast number of articles of gold and silver plate.

An instance occurs in the wills of this period of the intailing a bed of estate.* Ralph, Lord Basset, 1389, bequeaths the use of his great velvet bed for life to the person who shall first bear his arms. A red bed embroidered with lions, and a bed of Norwich stuff wrought with butterflies are mentioned in the will of Sir John Cobham, 1394. John Duke of Exeter, 1447, leaves a white bed with poppinjays to his daughter Anne; a bed covered with ermine, a bed of silk of black and green colour, a bed of red silk, another of blue silk, and a bed of white velvet are also expressly named as legacies in different wills. Amid the dresses and robes of state are an entire suit of vestments of velvet chequered, a suit of vestments of green cloth of gold, a whole suit of red vestments of cloth of gold, the property of Agnes Hastings Countess of Pembroke. Robert Earl of Suffolk, 1368, bequeaths his summer vestments, powdered with leopards, to his eldest son. Joane Lady Hungerford gives to her daughter-in-law a black mantle furred with minever, and the Lady Elizabeth Andrews enumerates a blue gown furred with white, a crimson gown single, and a fur of grey, and a single gown of velvet and fur of white to be divided between her daughters. Rich garments were frequently

* Testamenta Vetusta, vol. i.